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CHINA

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PART I



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EDITORIAL PREFACE

MANKIND has been making history very rapidly in the last thirty years Since the World War, particularly, social developments and political revolutions have been so numerous as to be almost bewildering The intelligent public, naturally, has a great interest in these things, as it has also an imperative need to be reliably informed about them

It is always difficult for the public to obtain an accurate bird's-eye view of the individual States which make up the world The existing standard histories are long, and for the most part deal with events and movements which already belong almost to the remote past On the other hand, many admirable books dealing with current developments are apt to ignore, or to treat too scantily, the previous development, which may have been continuous for a thousand years

The object of the present series is to present, in a reasonably moderate compass, the complete story of the development of the States of the world, from their origin to the present day While, however, due attention is given to origins and to the continuity of the life of each people and of each State, it is recognized that the interest of the public is, quite reasonably, in the present epoch and in the last thirty or forty years These volumes, therefore, emphasize recent history, but always in relation to the historic tradition and development of the past The books are each written by an authority, among the younger historians for the most part, who is or has been in intimate touch with the subject or with the people with which he deals The general editor is not responsible for particular views or opinions that they may put forward

R B MOWAT

NOTE ON CHINESE NAMES

It is the custom in China to write the family name first and the personal or given name afterwards, a method which has been followed in this book Chinese Emperors had a family and personal name, titular appellations covering all or part of their reigns, and a posthumous name They are referred to herein by that under which they have become generally known in Western countries

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MAPS

CHINA, GEOGRAPHICAL — Front End Paper

CHINESE EMPIRE UNDER CH'IEN LUNG — Back End Paper

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE first part of this work is mainly concerned with the origins and growth of Chinese society and of the Chinese Empire That Empire is no more, the examinations are but a memory, grass grows in the Forbidden City and in the Hall of Classics at Peking, but the traditional Chinese ways of thought and action, the product of four thousand years of history, still persist despite the flood of new ideas from the West The doctrines of Confucius, as interpreted, amplified or distorted by countless generations of disciples, remain the strongest formative influence in social and political ideals Taoist and Buddhist practices, combined with the older ancestral rites and nature cults, are the very warp and woof of popular customs So it is that imported Western institutions often work in strange fashion and serve unwonted ends Furthermore, Chinese historical evolution, if seen in the light only of politics, art and culture, tends to be a monotonous and largely inexplicable record of the waxing and waning of dynasties Some attempt has therefore been made to evaluate the part played by social and economic factors, although the study of this subject is still in its infancy

Yet changes are taking place in China and gathering increased momentum The old imperial structure, which remained essentially the same since 221 B C , collapsed largely under the blows of the intrusive West Its fall deprived China of two vital unifying institutions, the throne and the mandarinate, with consequent political disruption and intellectual conflicts The new China, slowly and painfully struggling into existence, has since 1928 made good progress towards political stability, but

as yet has not found a definite social philosophy to form the basis of new and permanent administrative reconstruction The two great world forces of nationalism and communism battle for supremacy in China, as elsewhere, with Communism at present in partial eclipse, but having as possible ultimate aid a formidable aggregate of poverty and social inequality Nor is it certain if China will be left free to shape her own destinies or have them moulded for her by one powerful and aggressive neighbour to the east, or by another, potentially stronger, on the north These matters are the subject of Part II

The preparation of this work has been facilitated by a period of study and travel in China which was made possible through the munificence of the Trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation, New York City I wish to express my deep gratitude to them for the opportunity thus given me In the course of my journeys in the interior of China I have received much hospitality and assistance from many people, both Chinese and foreigners, and I thank them all most heartily I am also indebted to my friends, Miss M E Cameron and Mr F D Schultheiss for reading through parts of the manuscript and giving many valuable criticisms and suggestions For the opinions expressed on men and events I am alone responsible

F C JONES

PEIPING, *January*, 1937

CHRONOLOGY

B C

c 1400 Shang Dynasty at Anyang

c 1100 Chou Dynasty founded

841 First certain date

551–479 Confucius

481–221 *Chan Kuo* era

358–338 Kung-sun Yang in Ch'in

373–288 Mencius

221 Ch'in Shih Huang Ti founds the Chinese Empire

206 Western Han Dynasty begins

140–87 Emperor Wu Ti

138–126 Chang Ch'ien in Central Asia

2 First appearance of Buddhism in China

A D

23–221 Eastern Han Dynasty

73–90 Conquest of Central Asia by Pan Ch'ao

221–280 The Three Kingdoms

290–589 Period of invasions and migrations Growth of Buddhism

618–907 T'ang Dynasty

712–757 Emperor Hsuan Tsung Brilliant literary and artistic era

756 An Lu-shan captures Ch'ang An

960–1127 Northern Sung Dynasty (Capital at K'aifêng)

1068–86 Reforms of Wang An-shih

AD

1127–1279 Southern Sung Dynasty (Capital at Hangchow)

1130–1200 Chu Hsi

1279–1368 Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty

1271–95 Travels of Marco Polo

1368–1644 Ming Dynasty

1403–24 Emperor Yung Lo

1514 Portuguese at Canton

1601 Ricci in Peking

1637 English at Canton

1644–1912 Ch'ing (Manchu) Dynasty

1661–1722 Emperor K'ang Hsi

1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk with Russia

1736–96 Emperor Ch'ien Lung Manchu Empire at zenith.

1842 Treaty of Nanking with Great Britain

1858 Treaties of Tientsin

1852–66 T'aip'ing Rebellion

1877 Tso Tsung-t'ang reconquers Sinkiang

1894 Sino-Japanese War

CHINA

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

China may be described as a distinct sub-continent in the great Eurasian land mass Separated from the Siberian plain by the steppes and deserts of Mongolia, from India by the lofty plateaux of Tibet and from Burma by a forbidding region of mountain and jungle, the home of fierce beasts and wild tribes, China was remote from other centres of population and culture until the advent of modern means of communication This relative isolation has been an important factor in the growth of the distinctive and largely indigenous Chinese civilization It has furthermore led to the emergence of one predominant language and culture in an area vast enough to be the seat of several rival linguistic and cultural groups The success of the Chinese in achieving a greater measure of political and linguistic unity than has been the case with Europe or India is in no small degree owing to the existence of more efficacious natural barriers against invasion by peoples equal or superior in numbers and in the level of civilized life

It is erroneous to regard the Chinese as ever having been completely cut off from the outside world In the northeast the Manchurian plain is an extension of that of north China, connected with it by the Shanhaikwan defile Manchuria, therefore, has been an important

avenue of influences from the north and has frequently formed an integral portion of Chinese territory An even more significant factor is the continued intercourse between the Chinese and the peoples of the Mongolian steppes, themselves in indirect contact with the main culture areas of Western Asia The great means of communication with these latter was for several millennia the route through the Tarim basin to the valley of the Huang Ho The existence of numerous city sites now abandoned to the encroaching desert indicates that Central Asia has suffered from increasingly arid conditions, and that it was once far more fertile and populous than it is to-day Therefore, in spite of the factor of distance as a retarding element in the migration both of peoples and of new social and intellectual concepts, intercourse between the Sinic and alien cultures via this route has from the earliest times been sufficient to provide the necessary stimuli to continued progress Whether the Sinic civilization has contributed more than it has borrowed from those of Western Asia must remain uncertain until further archæological research in north China and its vicinity has solved the problem of culture origins there It should be noticed that, despite the forbidding nature of the intervening terrain, the wet rice cultivation now ubiquitous in southern China, as well as the domestication of the water-buffalo and the fowl, may have spread overland from India

The sea has exerted little influence upon the history of northern China owing to the lack of good harbours along the coastline north of the Yangtze In the south, where the coast is more indented and seaports more numerous, the people early developed a maritime aptitude The Yueh race, who seem to have been akin to the Annamese, were noted as skilful sailors, and since the rugged nature of the southeastern provinces makes communication by sea easier than by land the sea route to Indo-China and beyond soon became of

importance While the south was brought under Sinic political and cultural domination and peopled by immigrants from the north, the continued influence of the sea has played its part in differentiating the southerner from the northerner It is sometimes remarked that, until the coming of the Western Powers by sea, China faced northwest, towards Mongolia and the ever present nomad menace That is true of the north, but the south and especially the Canton delta region has always looked towards the sea and the tropics

These geographical barriers have not isolated China completely from other lands, but have imposed such a limitation and retardation upon foreign political and cultural penetration that the essentially indigenous elements in Sinic culture have always in the past obtained an ultimate supremacy over alien infiltrations This fact provides a clue to the understanding of much of Chinese political and social history and gives to Chinese civilization its characteristics of marked tenacity combined with a comparative slowness of development and lack of rapid adaptability to new circumstances This ultimate effect of geographical conditions is to-day apparent when human ingenuity has triumphed over the natural barriers which were for ages the safeguard of China and exposed her ancient culture to the solvent of the rapidly changing Western industrial civilization. Thus geography has in this respect exerted an influence at once beneficial and injurious upon the course of Chinese history

China is divided geographically into several distinct regions, and this, combined with the vast size of the country and the poverty of communications, has fostered local separatism and militated against continued political unity and the emergence of a sense of nationality North China falls into two sharply differentiated sections of which the peoples have often been in antagonism The northwest, comprising the present provinces of Kansu,

Shensi and Shansi, is a mountain and plateau area, with settlement and agriculture limited to the loess-covered valleys and hillsides This loess is a light, friable soil, stripped from the surface of Mongolia and especially from the Ordos region, and deposited all over northwestern China by wind action exerted for countless ages While the mineral content of loess makes it an intrinsically fertile soil, abundant water is necessary to bring out this quality and to raise adequate crops, but the rainfall of the northwest is variable and scanty Consequently living conditions are more arduous than in northeast China, the region of the great plain Therefore, until the Chinese expanded into the Yangtze valley and began to colonize the south, the predominant factor in their history was a movement of population and so of political supremacy from west to east, the wilder but more vigorous highland peoples seeking to control and exploit the more civilized but less warlike ones of the eastern lowland

The great plain of northeast China, which to the south shades imperceptibly into the Yangtze valley, is largely an alluvial area, built up from the sea bottom by the enormous quantities of silt brought down by the rivers of north China The chief agent in this process is the mighty Huang Ho, the Yellow River, which flows for some 2,700 miles from Tibet to the Yellow Sea So great are the quantities of mud and silt it carries that its course is largely obstructed with sandbars, making the river unfit for navigation, except in certain stretches While the Huang Ho has given to China the region which has been the cradle of her race, it is also a constant source of disaster By depositing masses of mud and silt along its course it raises its bed to an ever higher level than that of the surrounding country and from time to time bursts through the dikes by which man strives to contain it, taking a heavy toll in life and property Moreover, during the last 2,500 years, the

Huang Ho has six times changed its course, flowing sometimes north and sometimes south of Shantung, an isolated mountain area amid the great plain From 1280 until 1852 the Yellow River found its outlet south of the Shantung promontory, usurping the bed of the smaller Huai River, but in the latter year it carved a new channel to the north, finally entering the sea some 250 miles from its former mouth, with terrible consequences to the millions in the path of its destroying waters Yet some good results from this periodic havoc, for when the flood subsides, the land affected is found to be coated with fertile mud, and, after resettlement, produces bumper harvests The problem of reaping this benefit, while avoiding the disaster, through effective flood control, has been a perennial one in northern China

The lower valley of the Huang Ho is connected with that of the Yangtze by the Huai River which, prior to railway communications, formed a connecting link between north and south of the utmost strategic importance In central China the mountains of southern Honan and northern Hupei are no great obstacle to communication owing to the Han River valley and to the existence of a belt of low country stretching from the northern plain to Hankow

In the west the lofty Min and Tsingling mountains extend across southern Kansu and Shensi, a subsidiary range, the Tapa, lying south of the intervening valley of the Han River These mountains rival the Rockies of North America in size and grandeur, and, seen from the air, present a majestic vista of innumerable lofty peaks, interspaced with deep valleys and precipitous canyons The region is still largely forest-clothed, and forms one of the few areas in China which have not been denuded of trees The mountains are a mighty barrier between northwestern and southwestern China, and to cross them is virtually to pass from one world to another,

so great are the differences in soil, climate, vegetation and consequently in the people themselves, between Shensi to the north and Szech'uan to the south

The valley of the Yangtze forms another great and distinct region The immense river, 3,200 miles in length, pours into China from the lofty Tibetan plateau through a series of deep canyons and gorges Taking its course through the rugged tableland of Yunnan, the Yangtze next enters a geographical sub-region, the great Province of Szech'uan, bounded by the giant Snow Mountains on the west, the Tsingling, Tapa and Wushan ranges to the north and east and the Yunnanese escarpments to the south Richly endowed by nature with the fertile soil of the Red Basin, adequately watered by the Min and other tributaries of the Yangtze, Szech'uan and especially the irrigated Chêngtu plain, merits the appellation of the Chinese Garden of Eden Normally isolated from the rest of China and frequently subjected to the worst forms of misgovernment, Szech'uan is yet rich in historical traditions, and seems destined, with the coming of modern communications and transport, to play an important rôle in the political and economic future of the Republic

Between Wanhsien, in eastern Szech'uan, and Ichang, in western Hupei, the Yangtze cuts its way through the Wushan range in a series of magnificent gorges, famed for the beauty of their scenery During the summer months, when the river is high, it swirls through the gorges in a turgid flood, making navigation difficult even for high-powered river steamers, while junks have for centuries been hauled upstream by coolies following well-worn tracks hewn out of the sides of the gorges From Ichang to the sea the Yangtze valley broadens out, the river widens steadily and the surrounding landscape is mostly flat and monotonous This region is the heart of modern China, studded with cities and teeming with people The Yangtze is the great waterway

of central China, navigable by ocean-going steamers for six hundred miles from its mouth, and by smaller steam-driven craft for a further thousand during the period of high water It has thus been since ancient times an important artery of communication From the strategic aspect, whoever controlled Szech'uan had an excellent base from which to move down river to the conquest of the whole valley and thus obtain a predominant position in China At the present day, owing to the defenceless position of China at sea, foreign navies can penetrate to the heart of the country, while Western commercial and cultural influences radiate inland from the numerous treaty ports along the river

The Nanling mountains separate the Yangtze valley from the basin of the Si Kiang, or West River, which is the most southern geographical unit, with the mountainous coastal provinces of Fukien and Chêkiang as a sub-region The West River valley forms the core of Liangkuang, or the two provinces of Kuangtung and Kuangsi The Canton delta, formed by the West River in conjunction with smaller streams, is another great centre of population Liangkuang, the most remote of all from the ancient centres of Chinese civilization, was the last area to be colonized by the expanding Chinese people, and has always been noted for the strength of its local particularism It looks towards the outer world, and, since the beginning of intercourse with the West, its people have been the restless innovators and revolutionaries of China

Climatic conditions have been as important as topographical in promoting diversity of environment, occupations and character among the people of China Extending from sub-arctic to sub-tropical latitudes, China experiences great varieties of temperature Her climate is monsoonal in nature, although less markedly so than is that of India In summer the atmosphere over the Central Asian deserts becomes rapidly heated,

and the hot, dry air rises, leaving a vacuum which is filled by moisture-laden winds from the Pacific In winter this process is reversed, and cold, dry winds sweep across China from Mongolia Except in regions of high altitude, the summer months are everywhere marked by blazing heat, over 100°F being frequently recorded North China, because of its proximity to the desert regions of Central Asia, tends to be even hotter than the Yangtze valley or the South, but is less humid and enervating than those regions Its winters are extremely cold and dry, with piercing winds from Siberia and Mongolia blowing across the plain Ice forms on the rivers and along the northern seacoast, but the snowfall is usually slight The Yangtze valley has a less bitter, but a raw and wet climate in winter, with more frequent snow In the south, despite its proximity to the tropics, the winters are often surprisingly cool

More important than temperature is the distribution and quantity of rainfall The monsoon character of the climate causes most of the precipitation to occur during the summer months, so that when the rain does come it frequently descends in torrents, causing floods and their corollary, famine From the historical data available it is possible to discern certain long-term cycles in the amount of rainfall, but the numerous yearly variations are the chief concern of the Chinese agriculturalist One summer may be marked by overmuch rain and floods, the next by a drought In either case the result is the same, ruined crops and starvation for millions Since the rain-laden winds blow inland from the south and southeast, the southern regions of China receive the most precipitation, frequently a superabundance, for to the usual monsoon rain is often added the heavy downpour caused by the numerous typhoons which scourge the China coast from July to October The Yangtze valley normally receives sufficient rain, but the central mountain zone, especially in the

west, checks the northward progress of the summer monsoon, consequently the rainfall in the north and northwest is often inadequate, and droughts are more frequent there

These differences in climate and rainfall have resulted in a profound dissimilarity between north and south China, a divergence which cuts across the regional contrasts already described The north is a yellowish-brown, semi-arid land, the south green and fertile The staple crops in the north are wheat, millet and kaoliang, rice being a luxury diet for the masses, in the south rice is the great agricultural product and the chief food of the peasant The growing season is limited in the north to a few months, and two crops are the most that can be annually raised, in the south work in the fields extends through the greater part of the year, and three or even four crops reward the labours of the farmer Roads in the north are mainly cart-tracks worn down by the passage of vehicles until they are below the level of the surrounding country, in the south they are narrow flagstone trails winding through the valleys amid the ubiquitous paddy fields Donkeys, mules, horses and camels are used as beasts of burden in the north, in the south man is the chief carrier of goods, the water buffalo being employed to clear the fields for rice-planting Northern villages and farmsteads are constructed mainly of mud or sun-dried bricks, in the south they are chiefly built with bamboo and thatch Population is dense in the north, but not so close-packed as in the southern valleys and riverine areas In general, and allowing for regional and individual variations, the northern Chinese is phlegmatic, fatalistic and conservative in temperament, the southerner nervous, excitable and radical in character, a difference due partly to divergent racial strains, partly to contrasting environments

These striking dissimilarities between north and south have largely determined the general course of

Chinese history While the north was once less bare of trees than it is at present, conditions of climate and soil preclude its ever having been thickly forested, whereas the south in ancient times must have been largely a region of jungle and swamp The north was in consequence originally better suited for human occupation, since it presented less formidable obstacles to primitive communities, ill equipped with means of clearing forests and draining swamps On the other hand, climatic conditions in the north, even if less severe than at present, were sufficiently arduous to give the necessary stimulus to progress So it was there that a settled civilization first arose, strong enough eventually to absorb all rival groups For the greater part of the historical era north China was the dominant political and economic area, while the south for long remained a sparsely-populated colonial region But when the ever increasing population of China began to fill up the Yangtze valley and reach to the southern coasts, the exploitation of these more fertile lands caused a shift of economic gravity to them Yet the north continued for long to wield political preeminence through its possession of the capital city and through the appointment from northern candidates of the majority of the official class This caused a fundamental antagonism between north and south which strengthened the disintegrating tendencies in Chinese politics and society and was the underlying cause of the fall of more than one dynasty At present the south has triumphed and the shift of economic and political power is complete, a process which is in marked contrast to the precisely opposite shift from south to north, which has characterized European history as well as that of the United States The growing industrialization of China consequent upon contact with the West may cause a reverse swing of the pendulum, since most of the mineral resources of China, especially in coal and iron, are located in the northern provinces Meanwhile,

the resentment of northern Chinese at the loss of their time-honoured political dominance has fostered separatist feeling, exacerbated the antagonism between north and south, and has thus furthered the ambitions of Japan

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF SINIC CIVILIZATION

CHINESE history is that of the growth of a civilization and not of a single race, much less of a nation-state The present inhabitants of China are an amalgam of peoples, the result of centuries of expansion, conquest, the absorption of the vanquished and the assimilation of nomad conquerors The Chinese from the first drew a clear distinction between themselves and the surrounding "barbarians," but this was based on cultural rather than on racial differences The origin of this cultural superiority is as yet unknown, since the traditional version of ancient Chinese history, contained in the literary sources which were given the status of "classics" by the Confucians, is now relied on only to a very limited degree by historians For the classical account is largely mythological, and a great deal of the pseudo-historical part has been shown by modern methods of textual criticism to be spurious, fabricated by the Confucian *literati* who were anxious to give to their tenets the sanction of an antique origin The remainder is of undoubted historical value, as embodying bona fide traditions of periods anterior to its composition

Archæological research has already thrown much light upon the subject of Sinic origins, although as yet far from any definite conclusions In 1927 the discovery of the "Peking Man" revealed that human beings existed in China a half million years ago Palaeolithic remains have been unearthed in the Ordos region, in the Yellow River valley and in the vicinity of Peking Numerous

late Neolithic sites have been found throughout China Nevertheless, the view that China has been continuously inhabited since the days of *Sinanthropus* by people of the same racial stock has as yet little to support it However, a link has been established between the late Neolithic and the Bronze Ages in China through the discovery near Tsinan, in Shantung, of the site of a city, of which the inhabitants, while they had no knowledge of other than stone implements, had yet reached a definitely civilized stage Their pottery ware and other utensils bear marked resemblances to those found in the Shang sites, thus arguing a continuity between these peoples

From 1899 onwards peasants living in the district of Anyang, in Honan, began to dig up numbers of bones inscribed with ancient characters, which scholars deciphered as belonging to the Shang dynasty, a line of rulers recorded in the literary sources, but whose actual existence was in doubt The inscriptions were found to consist of questions addressed to the Shang deities, the answers being obtained by the application of heat to the prepared animal bone or tortoise-shell and through the scrutiny by the divinators of the resulting cracks Since 1928 excavations carried on at a place long known as the "waste of Yin"[1] have uncovered the ancient capital of the Shangs, which was founded about 1400 B C , and destroyed some four centuries later

From the evidence already secured it is clear that the Shang were a people much superior in culture to the neighbouring tribes, with whom they seem to have been constantly at war They were skilled workers in bronze, knowledge of which was probably obtained from the Occident It does not follow that the Shangs themselves had a Western origin Their art designs are different from those of Western Asia, and the continued use of

[1] Yin was the name given to the Shang by their conquerors, the Chou

such utensils as the li tripod, found in earlier Neolithic graves, suggests a long-established culture mainly indigenous in character, though influenced by outside contacts The antiquity of their civilization is shown by the relatively high standard of their art, which included sculpture in marble, and especially by the advanced nature of their script This had evolved so far from primitive picture-writing that the characters inscribed on the oracle bones embody all the principles upon which the modern ones are formed, although different in shape and comparatively few in number [1] The Shangs knew the use of the brush in writing, and they probably had a literature, written on strips of bamboo which have not survived the ravages of time

In the Shang royal house the rule of succession was not from father to son, but from elder to younger brother This suggests that the agnatic family group, which has remained as the unit of society in China, was already firmly organized Below the royal clan was a class of nobles, the leaders in war and most likely also in administration, and an agricultural peasant community, probably in a condition of serfdom or slavery So far no evidence of a definite feudal system has been discovered The religion of the Shang people was a mixture of animism and ancestor worship Their chief god, Ti, or Shang Ti, was possibly the legendary forefather of the Shang rulers, and was a deity of war and agriculture The extent to which divination was practised as well as the evidence found in the tombs show that the Shang held the belief that the spirits of the dead can influence for good or evil the fortunes of the living The divinators were a skilled class, who wielded great power in the state and whose ideas on the nature of the soul and the functions of divination and ritual were the forerunners of the later philosophic systems

[1] Creel, H G, *The Birth of China*, pp 159–160

The Shangs were a warlike people, and the possession of bronze weapons and armour, as well as of the chariot, gave them a great advantage over their enemies Their direct rule was exercised only within a comparatively small area, although they may have imposed some form of vassalage upon the neighbouring tribes The darker side of Shang rule is illustrated by unmistakable evidence that they indulged in large-scale human sacrifices to the gods and immolated the dependants of a dead noble in his tomb, practices which continued into the succeeding Chou period According to Chinese traditions the Shang overthrew and replaced an earlier dynasty, the Hsia, but so far archæology has revealed no traces of this It may well have existed, for what is known of the Shang makes clear that by their time several of the permanent characteristics of Sinic civilization had reached a stage of advancement only possible through a long period of evolution.

The Shang were conquered, perhaps in the eleventh century B C , by the Chou These people seem to have migrated to the Wei valley, in Shensi, from an original habitat farther north, and they may have been impelled by a period of drought and famine to move from the semi-arid northwestern region into the fertile Honan plain The Chou were culturally much inferior to the Shang, and learned from them the art of writing and probably the use of bronze Chinese traditions assert that the Chou were vassals of the Shang and that the tyranny of Chou Hsin, the last Shang ruler, precipitated a revolt of subjects and vassal tribes alike, but this account has a suspicious resemblance to that told of Chieh, the last king of the Hsia, and cannot be taken at its face value

Until 771 B C the Chou capital remained in the Wei valley, so that the period is known as that of the Western Chou dynasty Little that is authentic has survived from this epoch, the first certain date being 841 B C ,

but it is possible to discern a steady decline in the royal power and an augmentation of that of the great aristocratic families The area under Chou sovereignty was much greater than that over which the Shangs had ruled It was therefore impracticable for the Chou kings to govern it all directly, and so they made large land grants to their relatives and to the nobles who had followed their banner These grants appear at first to have been definitely limited in amount, varying according to the rank of the recipient, revocable by the king, and non-hereditary The nobles were expected, in return for these lands, to render a certain amount of the produce to the court and to do military service when required Thus feudalism grew up and its usual results soon became apparent The Chou rulers, harassed by continual border warfare with outside tribes, and dependent on the nobles for support, were forced to admit the hereditary nature of the fiefs Thus the king lost control over the great feudatories, who more and more tended to become independent rulers in their own domains In 771 a shattering disaster overtook the royal power A barbarian tribe, the Ch'uan Jung, surprised and sacked the royal capital, Yu, the incompetent Chou king, being slain This event marked the end of all real authority on the part of the Chou rulers The line of kings went on, and the capital was moved to near where Loyang now stands, inaugurating the Eastern Chou dynasty, but the royal power was henceforth largely nominal, and the area formerly under Chou rule was divided between a number of really independent states This ushered in the *Ch'un Ch'iu* period, 771–481 B C, the classic era of feudalism and chivalry [1]

Ten states of major importance arose on the ruins of Chou power They were Chin, in the northwest,

[1] The *Ch'un Ch'iu*, or Spring and Autumn Annals, was the official chronicle of the state of Lu Confucius was mistakenly believed to have compiled this work

roughly comprising the modern Shansi, Yen, in the northeast, with its capital near where Peking now stands, Ch'i and its smaller neighbour Lu, in Shantung, Chou, the patrimony of the royal house, in what is now western Honan, and Wei, in northeastern Honan These, together with a number of smaller ones, were the truly Sinic states, distinguished by their cultural superiority Around them there grew up a group of non-Sinic states, of which the ruling houses claimed a Chinese royal pedigree and aped Chinese manners and customs, but the inhabitants of which were mostly barbarians Of these states the chief were Ch'in, extending over what is now Shensi and part of Kansu, Ch'u, in the middle Yangtze valley, Wu, in the Yangtze delta, and Yueh, which extended along the southeastern coast, and was distinct in race as well as in customs from the Sinic states In Szech'uan the kingdoms of Shu and Pa, isolated by the Tsingling range, appear to have reached a considerable stage of culture, but were usually outside the orbit of Chinese politics

All of these states, Sinic and non-Sinic, fought among themselves, and were from time to time rent by internal strife and rebellion During the sixth century B C they formed a loose confederacy, presided over by the ruler of the state which happened to be militarily predominant at the moment There were five of these hegemons in all, but none was able to found any lasting authority Of more enduring importance was the growth in size and power of the non-Sinic as compared with the Sinic states, foreshadowing the doom that was to overtake the latter During the *Ch'un Ch'iu* era wars were mostly local affairs waged for frontier territories, and were rarely pushed to a decisive conclusion The feudal code enjoined chivalry and courtesy towards an opponent, and frowned on extreme measures such as the extinction of a rival family or state

Although after 771 B C the Chou kings exercised real

authority only within the ever dwindling royal domain, they retained the royal title and precedence in the feudal hierarchy until 256 B C This was owing to the fundamentally religious nature of their office which gave them a sacrosanct position The religion of the Chou nobility, like that of the Shang, was a blend of animism and ancestor worship, both probably deriving from aboriginal fertility cults Each great family had its ancestors who had to be properly honoured by rites and sacrifices if the living members wished to enjoy continued good fortune and prosperity The more powerful the family on earth the greater the influence of its ancestral spirits, and most potent of all were the forebears of the royal house, supposedly descended from the primordial deities who shaped heaven and earth Therefore, while each noble family had its ancestral temple and each locality its earth gods and other deities and while every aristocrat had priestly as well as administrative duties to perform, the king alone could sacrifice for the whole land He alone could ensure the favour of Shang Ti, whom the Chou identified with the god of Heaven, their own highest deity Upon the proper exercise by the king of his religious functions depended the welfare of all, since the virtue of his ancestors warded off disaster from the whole country, and their ill-will brought drought and famine upon it The Chou kings regarded themselves as the Sons of Heaven, and as ruling by a heavenly mandate Their position approximated to that still retained by the emperors of Japan and, like the rulers of that country, the Chou kings retained their nominal position long after their political functions were, in fact, exercised by the great feudatories

The idea that the mandate of heaven could be revoked, and that its possession by a monarch was conditional on the benevolence of his rule, was a later development, coming to the fore only after the Confucianists had added an ethical content to the ancient ritualism. Confucius

himself deplored the growing disregard for the royal rights, and urged loyalty to the Chou rulers The *Ch'un Ch'iu*, or Annals of the state of Lu, continued to use the obsolete Chou calendar, and by implication refused to recognize any titles not granted by the king to the feudatories, who for long hesitated to make a too overt usurpation of royal functions The hegemons endeavoured to secure royal sanction for their position, and the first of them, Huan of Ch'i, ceded territory to a neighbouring duke rather than be accused of exercising the royal right of summoning a great vassal to leave his fief The ruler of Ch'u, a non-Sinic state, styled himself king, but he was regarded as an outside barbarian In 334 B C the princes of Ch'i and Wei agreed to recognize each other as kings, in order to counterbalance the hegemony which the Chou king had conferred on the ruler of Ch'in [1] By 315 B C all the rulers had taken the royal title, clearly indicating that the former veneration for the Chou had disappeared with the breakdown of the old religious and social order Even so, it was not until close on a century later that Ch'in seized upon the nine bronze tripods, the symbol of royal power, supposedly cast by Yu, legendary founder of the Hsia dynasty

The feudal nobles, ranging from the duke of a great state to the petty lord of a small fief, were sharply distinguished from the *hsiao jen*, the little men, or commoners The nobles were all members of one of the relatively few aristocratic clans They monopolized, by reason of their birth, all military and administrative positions Ancestor worship was confined to these great families, and they alone officiated in sacrifices to the gods of the earth and agriculture in their localities Unlike the unlettered chivalry of mediæval Europe, they were carefully educated, their curriculum including

[1] Lei, H T, "The Rise of the Emperor System in Ancient China," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, Vol x, No 2, July, 1936, pp 253–4

poetry, music and arithmetic, as well as instruction in archery and other military matters The most vital part of their training was in the code of gentlemanly conduct This prescribed minutely the way in which the noble should behave towards his ruler, higher lords and clan elders, as well as to a foe Any departure from this code was not merely a breach of good manners, but also a religious offence which would bring down the chastisement of heaven upon the culprit, and endanger the natural harmony of heaven and earth The feudal code was thus intimately connected with the religious observances in which every noble took some part It was essential to the whole social order, hence the stress laid upon it by the Confucian philosophers

The mass of the people were in a servile state, without political rights, and excluded from the state ceremonies, nor do they seem at this time to have had any ritual marriage or ancestral sacrifices There was a sort of communal mating between the sexes at the time of the spring festivals, followed by more permanent unions in the autumn The whole life and work of the peasant, like that of the mediæval villein, was regulated by overseers appointed by his lord

The economic organization resembled the manorial system in mediæval Europe The immediate lord received a land grant from the king or other overlord, part of which he retained as his personal estate, the rest he let out to the serfs They had to work on his domain, pay him part of the produce of the lands he allotted them, and serve as infantry in time of war The serf owned nothing, and was at the mercy of the lord, except for the restraint imposed by custom The size of the grant made to each lord was originally fixed according to his rank in the feudal hierarchy, while the acreage of the demesne and of the peasants' holdings was also settled Mencius gives a description of what is termed the *Ching T'ien*, or well-land system According to this every square

mile (*li*) of land was divided into nine squares, each containing a hundred *mou*[1] Eight families cultivated this area, one hundred *mou* being given to each, while the remaining hundred constituted the "public field," that is, the demesne of the lord In the centre was the *Ching*, or communal well, for irrigation purposes That so definite a system was ever the common practice is unlikely, for the amount of land held by a family probably varied in different districts There may have been some grouping around a central well, and it is quite likely that custom prescribed a definite proportion between the private holding of the lord and that rented to the peasants During the early Chou period, when untilled land was plentiful, productive power limited and agricultural economy a self-sufficient one, the lords, while getting as much labour service and rent as they could, had no incentive to encroach on the holdings of the peasants The nobles waged war on each other for lands and serfs and the feudal states fought for border territories, but such conflicts were usually local in nature and indecisive in effect

From the sixth century B C there took place a profound change in agricultural methods, which brought in its train a great social upheaval Sometime in the sixth century the Chinese learned the use of iron implements, probably from western or central Asia, and at about the same period came the use of oxen in ploughing and of animal manure as fertilizer A great increase in productivity resulted, just when the growth of towns as trading centres around the palaces of the feudal lords afforded a profitable market for surplus food supplies The lords saw great possibilities of enrichment in this, and so they began to extend their demesne at the expense of the plots held by their serfs, as well as by seizing on all available waste land This caused a three-fold conflict between lord and peasant, between greater

[1] Six *mou* = one acre

and lesser lords for the control of fiefs, and between state and state, the object of the stronger being now entirely to swallow up the weaker These new economic forces undermined both the manorial and the feudal systems Private ownership of land began to appear, marked by the institution of a land tax on acreage, irrespective of its nature, which was first instituted in 594 by the state of Lu The old feudal hierarchy was equally disorganized, for, thanks to the process of subinfeudation, many of the lesser nobles were better able to seize on peasant lands than were their superiors Hence they thrust their way upwards to a dominant position based more on wealth than on rank The rulers of the various states, while striving to maintain themselves against too ambitious vassals, tried to increase the productivity of state lands by dikes and irrigation projects, securing the labour for these from the growing numbers of landless peasants Canals were constructed to facilitate military movements and water control schemes were often designed at once to benefit the territories of their originator and to injure his neighbours by diverting flood waters on to their lands, or alternatively by depriving them of adequate water supplies

So began the period of the *Chan Kuo*, or Warring States, ushered in by the annexation of the state of Ch'ên by its neighbour, Ch'u, in 479 B C The new economic forces overrode the old feudal code, and Chou society disintegrated, alike in politics, social organization and morals There ensued some two hundred and fifty years of bitter strife until one state proved strong enough to absorb the remainder and until the social changes had run their destructive course Yet the iron nature of the times and the universal rivalries stimulated intellectual activity, with the result that this period is unparalleled in Chinese history for the brilliance and diversity of its political, social and philosophic thought.

The greatest practical influence was exercised by a

class of wandering refugee nobles, victims of the vicissitudes of the time These men were ready to serve any ruler who would employ them, usually as political advisers or diplomatists Far from being philosophers anxious to find a remedy for the evils of the day, they were absorbed in schemes of a machiavellian nature to aggrandize one state or check the growth of another The old feudal loyalties had no meaning for them, and their lives depended on their ability to further the ambitions of the ruler whom they happened for the time being to be serving, or to deceive him if, as was frequently the case, they were playing a double game When they failed in one or the other, their end was swift and unpleasant They, and not the philosophers, were the men who actually shaped the course of events during this period

The true philosophers were, like the politicians and diplomatists, often wanderers from their native heath A reformer who failed to gain the ear of his own prince would go from court to court, hoping to find some ruler willing to appoint him to office and to allow him to try out his plan of social redemption Invariably disappointed in this, he would devote himself to discussion and teaching, gathering a group of disciples who carried on his doctrines after his demise So arose the "Hundred Schools" of Philosophy These may be divided into three main groups the conservatives, who advocated a return to the old loyalties, the progressives, who strove to find a new principle on which to base the social order, and the mystics, who preached a withdrawal from society altogether Apart from these and akin to the class of adventurer-politicians, but differing from them in having a definite theory of government, instead of being mere opportunists, stood the Legists

The Confucianists were the conservative element among the philosophic schools Confucius (K'ung Tzŭ) himself, 551–479 B C, was so quickly surrounded with a

mass of idealized legend by his disciples that it is almost impossible to discern his true character and career He was born in the state of Lu of a family claiming descent from the former dukes of Sung, who were themselves related to the royal house of the Shang Hu Shih believes that Confucius was one of the class of officiators and litanists at certain religious ceremonies, especially funerals They had survived from Shang days, and cherished a prophecy that, five hundred years after the downfall of the Shang dynasty, a leader would arise among them to restore the glories of that house This background explains the insistence of Confucius upon the meticulous observance of the ancient ceremonies and rituals, the due respect for ancestors, and the maintenance of the feudal code It was because these were no longer properly carried out that the harmony between heaven and earth was disturbed, with resultant calamities The rules of social conduct had been laid down once and for all during the "golden age" of Yao and Shun, the model emperors who were supposed to have preceded the Hsia dynasty No improvement of these rules was possible, and only by a return to them could the ills of society be cured Their content was to be found in the classical writings, the *Shu Ching*, or Book of History, a compilation of historical documents, the *Shih Ching*, or Book of Poetry, containing ceremonial poems and hymns, as well as more popular folk-songs, the *I Ching*, or Book of Changes, a record of divinatory practices and deductions therefrom, together with the *I Li*, *Li Chi* and *Chou Li*, books of ritual and government organization The Confucianists therefore made these works an essential part of the curriculum of every educated person, and ultimately raised them to the position of classics, akin to the sacred scriptures of a religious sect

Confucius perceived that the observance of ancient rites and ceremonies would not of itself cure the social

ills, and the novel part of his teaching was the addition of an ethical content to the old purely ritualistic religion. He taught that men should practice benevolence and altruism in their social relationships, a code of behaviour summed up in his negative version of the golden rule. But Confucius limited this altruism mainly to the family circle and to the relation between sovereign and subject. Filial piety, wifely subjection, brotherly affection, and loyalty to the ruler were the virtues most highly prized. The loosening of the family bond resulted in a disintegration of society just as the breaking of the ties of loyalty brought about the collapse of the state. Therefore Confucius laid chief emphasis upon the restoration of family solidarity and allegiance to the rightful sovereign. In cases where these happened to conflict he would probably have given preference to the former.

According to Confucius the whole art of government consisted in rulers setting a good example to their subjects, who would take their cue from them. If they were careful in observance of the rites, conformable to the code of behaviour, respectful to their ancestors and benevolent in their dealings, the people would be the same, and the country be at peace. Should they be neglectful in these matters, so also would their subjects, with consequent contention and strife. The proper education of princes was therefore of primary importance.

Confucius failed to exert any influence upon the princes of his day. He left a group of disciples, none of whom equalled him in intellectual ability, and whose work was limited to propagating his doctrines and collating them in the *Lun Yu*, or Analects. It was not until more than a century after his death that his teaching was elaborated and new elements added to it by Mencius and Hsun Tzŭ.

Mencius[1] (Mêng Tzŭ) was also a native of Lu, and,

[1] He is believed to have lived from 373 to 288 B.C.

like Confucius, is said to have owed much to his upbringing by a wise mother, after the early death of his father The chief contributions of Mencius to the body of Confucian doctrine were his theory of the essential goodness of human nature and his views on the duties of the ruler He held that all men are born with a natural disposition to goodness, benevolence and wisdom, but they are not all equally able to develop these qualities The extent to which they can do so depends on the existence of a favourable environment, which proper educational methods can create While holding up the sage rulers of antiquity as the highest examples, education should encourage mental concentration and individual self-development In matters of government Mencius agreed with Confucius that the character of the people depended on that of the ruler, but he went farther in his assertion that the people were the most important element in the state, the sovereign the least It was the duty of the prince to care for the welfare of his people, and the mandate of heaven might be transferred from an unworthy ruler to one of merit In his discussion of the rectification of names, an important part of Confucian teaching, Mencius distinguished between the killing of a tyrant and the murder of an upright prince With Mencius, therefore, comes the first clear statement of the revocable nature of the mandate of heaven and the justice of deposing an unworthy ruler As the people are naturally disposed to goodness, laws and punishments are unnecessary The benevolent prince will have no enemies, and need not use force of any kind His function is chiefly to care for the economic welfare of his subjects It was in this connection that Mencius described the *Ching T'ien* system, and advocated a return to it as the remedy for the social and economic evils of the period

Hsun Tzŭ, a younger contemporary of Mencius, differed from him in his estimate of human nature The character of every man, according to Hsun Tzŭ, is made

up of natural instincts and acquired characteristics The former are evil, that is, anti-social, since men naturally tend to follow their desires and are regardless of the interests of others The wise emperors of the golden age therefore established the rites and code of etiquette as a means of inculcating goodness and turning the instincts of men to the service of society All ages are similar in character, and the rules laid down by the ancients are immutable, nor should any deviation from them be tolerated Instruction in the rites and the code will usually keep men in the proper path, and the most important function of the prince is to see that his subjects receive this schooling Yet there will be some whose evil nature cannot be counteracted by these educational methods, and for these the ruler must prescribe penal laws Here Hsun Tzŭ departs radically from the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, who both eschewed laws and punishments as a means of governing Hsun Tzŭ is not explicit on the question of how the ruler is to distinguish between those for whom instruction in the orthodox doctrine is sufficient and those who need to be coerced by law A modern Chinese commentator suggests that the former method is for the aristocracy, the latter for the commoners [1] This was certainly the practice in the Han dynasty and later eras

The great rival of the Confucianist school was that of the Taoists, of whose origins little is known Their reputed founder, Lao Tzŭ, was almost certainly a legendary figure, and the book attributed to him, the *Tao Te Ching*, was not composed until centuries after he is supposed to have lived The same is true of the work bearing the name of Lieh Tzŭ Chuang Tzŭ, who lived in the later fourth century B C , is the first clearly historical figure among the early Taoist philosophers Some scholars believe that the mystic element in Taoism was a late growth, and that the movement was in origin

[1] Cheng, A C , *Hsun Tzŭ's Theory of Human Nature*, pp 59–60

a popular one, opposed to the aristocratic tendencies of Confucianism, and concerned mainly with alchemy and magic This would certainly explain the otherwise extraordinary permanence of a school whose mystic doctrines could have been intelligible only to a very few

The professional divinators of the Chou period gradually evolved a theory of the origins and nature of the universe as arising from the interaction of two eternal and immutable forces, the *Yang* and the *Yin*, the one positive, creative and formative, the other negative, disintegrating, and destructive Their constant alternation brings about the unending process of change and transformation operative throughout the universe This process they termed the *Tao*, or governing principle The *Yin-Yang* theory has had a profound effect on Chinese thought, and some of the philosophic schools of the late Chou era were strongly influenced by it Chuang Tzŭ gave a metaphysical content to the *Tao* He taught the futility of human reason and the illusory nature of the visible world The sage should withdraw from this and seek to gain comprehension of the *Tao* by inward meditation The virtues inculcated by the Confucianists were a sign of decadence, for they only arose when knowledge of the true nature of the *Tao* had been lost This element in Taoism was nihilistic, denying the utility of both government and society It may have represented a popular reaction against the growing tyranny of the rulers of the *Chan Kuo* epoch, and has always found a sympathetic response from the innate dislike of overmuch governmental regulation and conformity to social custom which characterizes the Chinese Essentially anarchic in character, it could not form the basis of a reconstructed society

The materialist philosophy of Yang Chu, while strongly influenced by Taoism, was without its tendency to metaphysical speculation and magical practices All

that remains of his teaching is a mere fragment embedded in a Taoist work Thanks to his evident fondness for postulating startling reversals of the orthodox Confucian estimate of the sages and the tyrants of antiquity, his doctrines have been misinterpreted by moralist commentators He was primarily an individualist, and the core of his teaching was a protest against interference with the lives of others, no matter how exalted the motive might be Since human beings were destined to a short and fleeting existence they should seek to attain happiness and peace of mind This is best achieved by the cultivation of the bodily senses and instincts, repression of which is mistaken and productive of misery

Yang Chu perceived that unrestrained egoism led to conflict between men and consequent unhappiness He urged moderation, and condemned insatiable striving after wealth, fame, or rank, because the devotion of all energy to one object sacrificed much of the full potentialities of each individual, and was, moreover, useless, since none of these things could be enjoyed after death The wisest man was he who contemplated both life and death with philosophic calm, enjoyed the former to the full, and neither sacrificed himself for others nor dwarfed his personality by undue devotion to one ambition

At opposite poles to Yang Chu were the Mohists The founder of this school, Mo Ti, was a philosopher of the fifth century B C , of whom little is known except that his life exemplified his doctrines and won him high renown, even among his opponents He may almost be considered a religious teacher, for he regarded the universe as governed, not by an unchanging, impersonal principle, but by a personal God, Shang Ti, to whom he attributed a love of justice and a hatred of evil, although he did not formulate any theory of rewards or punishments in an afterworld The basic doctrine of Mo Ti

was that man should love all his fellows with equal fervour and without distinctions, for these led to the rise of selfish interests, contention and strife He especially condemned the Confucian emphasis on family loyalties as causing each family to regard its welfare above that of all others, with consequent social disharmony He denounced the aggressions of rulers, and regarded offensive war as murder, although he did not deny the right of resorting to force in self-defence, and some of his followers were specially interested in military affairs

Mo Ti won adherents as much by the novelty of his method as by the content of his teaching In contrast to Confucius, who based his doctrines on the supposed example of Yao and Shun, Mo Ti appealed to reason, and sought to prove his tenets by logical exposition and deduction So great was the attraction of this new system that the followers of Mo Ti tended to concentrate upon logical subtleties to the neglect of what he would have considered the essentials of his teaching The neo-Mohists of the third century B C were skilled dialecticians, and had grasped the idea of relativity in time and space, but their paradoxes were unintelligible save to a few, and they had no lasting influence

The Confucianist school was eventually to emerge victorious over its opponents and to establish itself as a state-supported orthodoxy This success was not due to the superiority of Confucian doctrines, which were in many ways retrogressive and less well adapted to the needs of a growing civilization than were those of rival philosophies But the strength of the Confucianist school lay in these very faults, for its conservatism and narrowly dogmatic character, as compared with the individualist and fissiparous nature of the dissident groups, gave it a cohesion which enabled it alone to survive the shock of adversity and persecution which affected all the philosophic schools in the days of the Ch'in empire

CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION OF THE CHINESE EMPIRE

THE long agony of the *Chan Kuo* period was ended in 221 B C , when the ruler of Ch'in, having conquered and annexed all the other states, proclaimed himself emperor of a united China The victory of Ch'in was mainly due to the reorganization of its political, social and military institutions in accordance with Legist principles, and these in consequence formed the basis of the new imperial administration

The Legists, among whom the most outstanding were Kung-sun Yang, Han Fei-tzŭ, and Li Ssŭ, believed in absolute, but not arbitrary, monarchical government, exercising authority through definite written laws enforced by draconian penalties Han Fei-tzŭ and Li Ssŭ, who had both been pupils of Hsun Tzu, agreed with him that the essentially evil instincts of men needed the restraints of law, but differed radically from him in making such law applicable to all classes alike Moreover, they regarded the law of the state as the sole criterion of the conduct of the subject, and rejected with scorn the ethical systems of the philosophic schools, which they considered as not merely impractical but also injurious In their view, if the people became engrossed in the study of different ethical principles, rites, odes and history, the country would be enfeebled by the consequent dissensions, and fall an easy prey to its enemies

The Confucian insistence upon reversion to the customs of the ancient days was anathema to the Legists, who

held that each age had its own methods of government and what was suitable in the past would not suffice for the present The immediate problem was how best to organize the political and social institutions of a country so as to make it stronger than its enemies Military efficiency was the paramount objective of the Legists, and law was the instrument by which society was to be refashioned to achieve this end War and agriculture were to be the primary occupations, and all others should be suppressed or at the least subordinated to these essential activities

Kung-sun Yang, a native of the state of Wei, who, denied employment by the ruler of his own country, became chief minister to the Duke of Ch'in, and directed its policy from 358 to his fall in 338 B C , put these ideas into practice in his adopted state In reforming the laws of Ch'in, Kung-sun Yang utilized the *Fa Ching*, a code arranged in six sections by Li K'uei, an earlier Wei Legist This now became the basis of Ch'in law and hence of the codes issued by succeeding imperial dynasties [1] While the Ch'in ruling house was Sinic in origin, the majority of the warlike but scanty population consisted of subjugated Jung and Ti barbarians, so that the organization of society was probably more on a tribal than on a feudal basis The Lord of Shang[2] broke the power of the feudatories by making appointments to office depend strictly on merit, not on birth, and by the issue of a stringent code of laws intended to concentrate all power in the hands of the ruler He undermined the tribal organizations by separating them into families and by the institution of groups of five families with mutual responsibilities for keeping the peace and obeying the law The Ch'in capital was moved

[1] Escarra, J , *Le Droit Chinois*, pp 91–2 , 94 *n*

[2] This was the title given Kung-sun Yang by the Duke of Ch'in

to a more central position at Hsien Yang and the whole country divided into forty-one districts, each administered by an official directly appointed by the ruler The Ch'in army was reformed by measures designed to stimulate the utmost bravery among the troops A constant and adequate food supply for the soldiers was ensured by the institution of a direct government land tax payable in grain, by the encouragement of farming and the strict control of trade, by sumptuary laws intended to prevent the export of foodstuffs in return for useless luxuries, and by the colonization of waste lands

Thus Ch'in emerged a unified bureaucratic state, organized as a vast war machine, against which its more civilized but less firmly-knit eastern rivals were at a hopeless disadvantage While Kung-sun Yang himself perished after the death of his princely patron, his policies were continued and expanded, and on the agricultural side reached their zenith in 246 B.C., the year in which King Chêng, the future First Emperor, ascended the throne In that year a great irrigation project, the Chêngkuo Canal, was completed This so augmented the resources of Ch'in that it became what has been termed a Key Economic Area,[1] that is, one which can feed and maintain a larger army than any other and possession of which is consequently a great aid to final victory This, combined with increased military efficiency due to the growing use of cavalry, a practice adopted from the Hsiung Nu, enabled the king of Ch'in to overrun and absorb the six other states and unite all China under his sway In 221 B C he assumed the title of *Shih Huang Ti*, or First August Emperor

The internal policy of the First Emperor consisted in the application of Legist principles, which had proved so successful in Ch'in, to the whole empire, in order to concentrate authority in his own hands and to shape

[1] Chi, Ch'ao-Ting, *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History*, pp 75–7

all institutions on a uniform pattern In this he was greatly aided by his able ministers, Li Ssŭ and Mêng I, and by the brilliant general Mêng T'ien, although behind all was his own ruthless will and fierce energy In pursuit of the first aim he swept away the political power of the feudal lords, and divided the empire into provinces and districts ruled by his own officials To ensure the success of this system the emperor is said to have had one hundred and twenty thousand of the old aristocratic families brought to Ch'in, thus removing their influence from the provinces [1] The conquered populations were disarmed and their weapons sent to Hsien Yang By the institution of a land tax the emperor endeavoured to add to his resources and to encourage private ownership of land, thus hastening the decay of economic feudalism

Uniformity was promoted by the construction of great highways from Hsien Yang to all parts of the empire and by the standardization of the length of axles, so that carts from every district could traverse these routes The laws of Ch'in were enforced throughout the empire and those of the conquered kingdoms abolished A uniform system of weights and measures was devised, and, more important, Li Ssŭ is credited with inventing the "lesser seal" script to replace the variations in characters which had hitherto existed This reform, doubtless intended to simplify the task of drafting decrees applicable to various parts of the Ch'in dominions, had an enduring effect in promoting cultural unity

These sweeping changes, enforced with the utmost harshness, due to the Legist belief in rule through fear of punishments, aroused bitter hostility among those who suffered from them The dispossessed royal houses and feudal nobility naturally only awaited an opportunity to return to the former order of things The class of

[1] This number of families is incredibly large and would have involved the transportation of close on a million people

adventurer-politicians, whose occupations, particularly in the diplomatic sphere, had gone now that the contending states had vanished, were equally aggrieved The philosophic schools, in particular the Confucianists, who regarded the principles and methods of the Legists with abhorrence, loudly championed the feudal era and urged the emperor to abandon the administrative methods of the Legists and to appoint kings and other dignitaries to rule various portions of the empire This aroused the wrath of the Legists, who felt that the new reforms would never become generally accepted so long as the scholars were permitted to inveigh against them and to instruct their pupils in the feudal histories and in non-Legist principles The emperor himself at first tried to conciliate the scholars by giving seventy of them the honorary title of *po shih*[1] and employing them as archivists and as advisers on court etiquette, but they continued in their denunciations In 213 B C one of them criticized the emperor to his face for not modelling his policy on the supposed example of Yao and Shun

This gave Li Ssŭ his opportunity, and he submitted a draft decree for the approval of the emperor It ordered that all copies of the histories of the feudal states, of the *Shu Ching* and *Shih Ching*, and of the works of the "Hundred Schools" were to be burned Exempted from this fate were the history of Ch'in itself, and copies of the other prescribed works in the custody of the seventy *po shih*, the keepers of the royal libraries and archives Furthermore, books on medicine, divination and agriculture were also to be spared Heavy penalties were to be inflicted for any evasion of the decree, and those who continued to criticize the new régime and to advocate a return to the past were to be put to death Ch'in Shih Huang Ti gave his assent and the decree was put into effect

[1] A literary degree In modern education it is used as the equivalent of Ph D

This measure earned Li Ssŭ and his master the execration of succeeding generations of scholars, but, while it was enforced with great severity, and many of the literati were put to death for attempting to evade it, it did not of itself cause an irreparable loss to Chinese historical literature The chief peril lay in the concentration of the surviving copies in the libraries at Hsien Yang In 206 B C the city was sacked and burned, with a consequent destruction of books probably more disastrous than the burnings under Ch'in Shih Huang Ti While the intransigent attitude of the scholars brought their fate upon themselves, the result of the decree was to fan their hatred of the Ch'in empire, without rendering them completely innocuous, and thus the autocracy was weakened, rather than strengthened, by this edict

The fatal defect of the Legist position was that a state organized primarily for war can never long remain at peace, and must eventually collapse through overstraining its resources After the destructive warfare of the *Chan Kuo* epoch the country sorely needed a period of rest and recuperation, but the external policy of the First Emperor was one of expansion which resulted in fresh heavy taxation, forced labour and other exactions upon an already overburdened people Between 221 and 214 B C a series of expeditions conquered the people of Yueh and brought the whole southeastern coastal region, including the Red River basin in what is now Indo-China, under nominal Ch'in control But the Ch'in administrative system was not extended to these territories, and the conquest proved as ephemeral as it was costly

The steppe lands to the north of the empire were at this time occupied by the Hsiung Nu, a Mongol-Tungusic people who formed a great confederation of tribes under the leadership of a paramount chief, and who for three centuries remained a constant menace The Hsiung Nu were far from being entirely uncivilized,

as recent excavations of the tombs of their chiefs have revealed, but they were a race of pastoral nomads in perpetual feud with the settled agriculturalists to the south of them They were born horsemen and their mobility made them dangerous antagonists to the Chinese armies, which were still composed mainly of infantry, with a nucleus of chariots and cavalry During the *Chan Kuo* era the states of Yen, Chao and Ch'in had all built frontier walls as a defence against Hsiung Nu raids, but these walls were unconnected The policy of Ch'in Shih Huang Ti was partly offensive, partly defensive in character He sent Mêng T'ien with a large army to the northwestern frontier That general defeated the Hsiung Nu and added a large stretch of territory to the Ch'in possessions The emperor then ordered the existing walls to be connected up and extended, on the northeast to the sea, on the northwest to cover the new areas conquered by Mêng T'ien, making one continuous barrier for a distance of some fourteen hundred miles Although Ch'in Shih Huang Ti did not build the whole wall, as is often supposed, his extensions and improvements necessitated an immense amount of forced labour and added to the heavy strain on the empire It should be remarked that the present Great Wall dates chiefly from the Ming period, and does not follow the route of that of Ch'in Shih Huang Ti

The First Emperor died in 210 B C while on one of his periodic progresses through the empire In three years his family was exterminated, and the great political structure which he had built up was in ruins The prime cause of this débâcle was inherent in the organization of the empire, and was to recur frequently with succeeding dynasties The court, the administration and the army were maintained by grain tributes, exacted mainly from the key economic region, with other areas as subsidiary sources of supply Large scale military or other expenditure on the part of the rulers meant

augmentation of the tribute, and when this reached such a pitch that the peasantry were driven to famine level, the country was ripe for revolt This was the state of affairs at the death of Ch'in Shih Huang Ti His successor, who was not the legal heir, but had been put on the throne through the intrigue of an ambitious eunuch, Chao Kao, was a mere puppet To secure his position, Chao Kao put all the leading ministers of Ch'in to death, including Mêng T'ien, Mêng I and Li Ssŭ This precipitated a revolt in the Ch'in army, the last support of the dynasty, and then mutinous soldiers, discontented peasants and vengeful feudalists combined to destroy it

Although the Ch'in empire perished, the mutual rivalries of its heterogeneous opponents prevented any lasting return to the old feudal era, despite an attempt to do this After a few years of strife, unity was restored by Liu Pang, who, beginning as a bandit leader, had fought his way to the fore, and had been shrewd enough to get control, first of Szech'uan and then of the key area of Kuanchung, the heart of what had been Ch'in In 202 B C he defeated his chief rival, Hsiang Yu, and proclaimed himself emperor, with the title of Han Kao Tzŭ This inaugurated the Western Han dynasty, 206 B C to A D 9[1]

The administrative system erected by Han Kao Tzŭ was a compromise between bureaucratic absolutism and feudalism In the territories under the direct rule of the emperor, prefectures were established, as in Ch'in days, although smaller in area, and above them were the provincial units Apart from these were a number of vassal kingdoms, whose rulers were all members of the imperial family The policy of the Han emperors was henceforth to augment the imperial power at the expense of the vassal states, and this proved successful Their

[1] The dynasty was dated from 206 B C , because Liu Pang had become King of Ch'u in that year

possession of Kuanchung, where a new capital was built at Ch'ang An, gave to the emperors resources outweighing those of the feudatory kingdoms, and the revolt of seven of these in 154 B C was crushed As a result the Emperor Hsiao Ching issued a decree in 144 B C , making all the sons of a vassal equal inheritors of his estate and providing that if any one of the various branches of a family failed of issue the lands it held reverted to the throne This steadily diminished the feudal holdings until they dwindled to mere petty lordships, deprived of all political influence Han Kao Tzŭ and his successors also endeavoured to strengthen their position by the institution of emperor-worship as a state religion, but this was dispensed with by the later rulers of the Western Han epoch, since they felt secure enough to do without what had been an artificial cult, looked on with disfavour by the literati

The zenith of the Western Han epoch was reached during the reign of the Emperor Wu Ti, 140–87 B C , the most outstanding member of the dynasty after Han Kao Tzŭ himself The main achievements of Wu Ti were the conciliation of the Confucianists, the extension of Chinese influence into Central Asia, the recovery of the south, and the settlement of financial and economic problems which had baffled his predecessors

Han Kao Tzŭ was a rough soldier of peasant origin who regarded academic scholarship with contempt, and refused to repeal the decree of Ch'in Shih Huang Ti against discussion of the ancient texts, although this had been a dead letter since the fall of the Ch'in Kao Tzŭ died in 195 B C , and four years later his successor was persuaded to repeal the hated edict The Ch'in persecution had largely destroyed the rivals of Confucianism as distinct schools The Taoists remained very influential, but they were alchemists and magicians rather than philosophers Confucianism, while retaining an essential nucleus of the teachings of Confucius,

Mencius, and particularly of Hsun Tzŭ, had absorbed Mohist and Taoist doctrines and become eclectic to an extent which would have shocked its founder Its political philosophy also underwent a change, and under the influence of such scholars as Tung Chung-shu, it began to seek a justification for the Han empire in the institutions of antiquity Wu Ti, who saw the value of such a moral foundation for the empire, extended his patronage to the scholars in their efforts to resuscitate the ancient literature He appointed many of them to high office, and debarred Legists from posts in the government In 136 B C he nominated a special group of *po shih* to decide which of the Confucianist texts should be given the status of classics, and in 124 B C he founded an imperial academy for the study of these Some of the graduates of this academy received official positions, and in this lay the germ of the examination system under later dynasties

The extent to which Wu Ti supported Confucianism should not be exaggerated Equally remarkable was his elaboration of the old Sinic cult and his stress upon the importance of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth at the sacred T'ai Shan in Shantung These the emperor alone could perform, since he was the head of the temporal world as these deities were of the spiritual Again, Wu Ti, in common with all the emperors of the Han dynasty, was a fervent believer in the magical practices of the Taoists, and spent much time and money in search of the 'elixir of life, the transmutation of metals into gold, and other phantasies

The Hsiung Nu had taken advantage of the confusion following the downfall of the Ch'in to raid the northern provinces Wu Ti attempted to break their power, partly by taking the offensive against them, partly by contracting alliances with other peoples hostile to them A race called the Yueh Chih, who were possibly of Indo-European stock, had been driven out of Kansu

by the Hsiung Nu and had migrated to the Ili Valley Expelled from here by the Wu Sun, in alliance with the Hsiung Nu, the Yueh Chih moved into Sogdiana, which they took from the Greco-Bactrian kingdom established there after the break-up of the empire of Alexander the Great In 138 B C Wu Ti sent Chang Ch'ien at the head of a mission to find the Yueh Chih and enlist their aid against the Hsiung Nu After ten years of captivity by the latter, the Chinese envoy escaped and reached first the Wu Sun and then the Yueh Chih, but found these moving south to wrest Bactriana from its Indo-Greek rulers, and unwilling to return eastwards Chang Ch'ien therefore went back to Ch'ang An, which he reached in 126 B C His mission, while a political failure, greatly extended the knowledge of Central Asia at the Chinese court, and led to further military, commercial and cultural contacts In 121–119 B C the Han general Ho Ch'iu-ping drove the Hsiung Nu from western Kansu, established military colonies there, and opened up the route to the west, bringing the Chinese into touch with the small city-states established in the oases of the Tarim basin Some of these were brought under Chinese suzerainty, while in 102 B C the general Li Kuang-li, after an initial defeat, forced the Graeco-Bactrian state of Ta Yuan, or Fergana, to become a client ally of the Han In 51 B C the Hsiung Nu confederacy split into two parts, the southern of which also acknowledged the overlordship of the Han emperors, so that the pressure on the northern frontier was for the time being eased

In order to outflank the Hsiung Nu on the east, Wu Ti, in 108 B C , conquered and annexed the kingdom of Ch'ao Hsien, which comprised part of Manchuria and northern Korea A Chinese military outpost was established at Lak Lang, where recent excavations have revealed evidences of the cultural influence of the Han period on Korea, and through that country, on Japan

Wu Ti also undertook the reconquest of the south, which had reverted to independence after the collapse of the Ch'in He did this partly in the hope of finding a southwesterly route to India, which Chang Ch'ien had suggested as an alternative to the long and arduous Central Asian one, but topographical difficulties prevented development of the route The conquered southern territories, largely aboriginal in population, had Chinese colonies planted in them, especially in the Canton delta, but still remained a loosely-held colonial area

The heavy expenditures necessitated by this policy of expansion accentuated the financial and economic difficulties which Wu Ti had inherited from his predecessors The growth of a money economy and the expansion of trade consequent upon political unity had caused a shortage of currency A great deal of private minting resulted until the country was flooded with debased coins, to the injury both of the government and of the new merchant class After various unsuccessful experiments Wu Ti managed to cure this evil by the issue of a new government coinage, circulating at its intrinsic value, while the old coins were declared valueless Another problem was the price-raising tactics of the grain merchants, salt boilers and ironmasters, which not only caused distress to the people, but, what was more important in the eyes of the court, made the government pay heavily for the supply of these valuable commodities Various devices were employed to counteract this, including the sale of titles and offices to those who would facilitate the provision of grain and other supplies for the army In 120 B C Wu Ti made iron and salt government monopolies, but left the control of these industries in the hands of the men who had built them up This alliance between the court and the new commercial and industrial class solved the difficulty of an adequate supply of necessaries for the army and the capital, but it doubtless added to the burdens of

the people, and was fiercely, though vainly, attacked by the Confucianists In 110 B C Wu Ti checked the grain speculators by the establishment of a state-trading system, by which the government bought when produce was cheap and sold when prices rose, so as to keep price levels even

In general, the long reign of Wu Ti saw the people of the Han empire more prosperous and contented than ever before, although many social and economic evils remained Lustre was also added to this period by the production of numerous literary works of merit, chief of which was the *Shih Chi*, or Historical Memoirs, begun by Ssŭ-ma T'an and completed by his more famous son, Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien Despite the uncritical use of early materials, the *Shih Chi* remains the most important source for Chinese history down to the end of the reign of Han Wu Ti

After the death of Wu Ti the Western Han dynasty declined and was finally overthrown Its fall was due mainly to social and agrarian problems for which no effective remedy could be found One source of trouble was the relative decline in the fertility and resources of Kuanchung as compared with those of Honei, an area which comprised part of the present Honan, Hopei and Shantung The transport of supplies from Honei to Ch'ang An was difficult, owing to the obstacles to navigation in the Yellow River, while most of the irrigation and flood control projects in Honei were undertaken by local officials or private individuals, who grew wealthy as a result and tended to become independent of the central authority The accumulation of landed estates in the hands of the rich was also a serious problem, both because it created a class of landless peasantry, ripe for rebellion, as well as an oppressed tenantry and a slave class, and also because the local territorial magnates, powerful enough to evade taxation and to exert influence in their districts, were a new menace to the imperial power in the provinces What made this difficult to

check was the fact that the court aristocracy, the administrative officials and the new commercial class were all interested in land grabbing

A direct cause of the fall of the Western Han was the overweening power of the families of the empresses The emperors had to take their wives from some subject house, and this meant that all the members of that house expected and usually received high offices, titles and lands, which they strove to increase Fearing to lose these, they would endeavour to perpetuate the power of the empress, after the decease of her husband, or, if this were not possible, to usurp the throne Repeated plots of this nature were foiled, but from 48 B C the Wang family, relatives of the wife of the Emperor Ch'en Ti, became all-powerful In A D 1 one of its members, Wang Mang, was made regent, and in A D 8 he seized the throne and proclaimed a new dynasty

Wang Mang has been described as an innovator and a socialist, but this appears to be a reading of modern terms into a past epoch Actually he was an earnest Confucianist, who greatly extended the system of education on Confucian lines which had been growing since the reign of Wu Ti Like all the Confucianists, he looked backwards rather than forwards, and tried to cure the evils of his day by a return to what was supposed to be the social organization of the early Chou period, particularly the idealized *Ching T'ien* system In A D 9 he issued an edict which, after praising the virtues of the ancient *Ching T'ien* organization and deploring its destruction by the Ch'in rulers, declared that the land was to be henceforth termed imperial land, slaves were no longer to be bought and sold, and that all families with less than eight male members, but possessing more than nine hundred *mou* of land, were to distribute the surplus to their relatives and neighbours on pain of death for any disobedience [1]

[1] Lee, M , *The Economic History of China*, pp 174–5

This proved a complete failure, largely because the government officials, who were charged with its enforcement, were themselves the chief offenders in accumulating lands, and used the decree as a means to secure further gains In A D 12, significantly enough on the petition of an official, apparently a Legist, who bluntly stated that a return to the *Ching T'ien* system was contrary to the popular will and could not be carried out, the scheme was abandoned It had earned Wang Mang the ill-will of the powerful, and only increased the hardships of the masses, consequently rebellions broke out Liu Hsin seized the opportunity to revive the Han cause, and by getting control of Honei was eventually able to take Ch'ang An, kill Wang Mang, and restore the Han dynasty He moved the capital to Loyang, in Honei, and took the title of Kuang Wu Ti

The early emperors of the Eastern Han dynasty, A D 23–221, were able men who restored peace and prosperity to the empire They endeavoured to ameliorate the distress of the peasants by tax exemptions, by settling the landless on waste areas, and by state loans, but they could not get at the root of the evil, the monopoly of the most fertile areas by the wealthy They were patrons of Confucianism and further extended the educational system under the control of the Confucianists In A D 59 the Emperor Ming Ti began the state cult of Confucius, as distinct from the worship paid to the sage by his own descendants and other private individuals or bodies

The most important achievement of the later Han was the conquest of Central Asia Chinese influence had declined in that region during the disorders following the usurpation of Wang Mang, and many of the small states in the Tarim basin had fallen under the Hsiung Nu suzerainty In A D 73 the re-assertion of Chinese power was begun by Pan Ch'ao, the famous member of a talented family His father and elder brother were

historians who continued the work of Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien to the end of the Western Han, his sister was the first outstanding woman scholar in China, and his son was, like himself, a great general

Pan Ch'ao cleared the way for an advance into Central Asia by defeating the Hsiung Nu in two great battles and then one by one reducing the Bokharian and Iranian peoples of what is now Sinkiang to obedience In A D 90 the old allies of China, the Yueh Chih, who had moved south since the days of Ch'ang Ch'ien and founded the Indo-Bactrian kingdom of Kushana, turned against the Han, but were defeated by Pan Ch'ao Deprived of this last aid, all the states of Central Asia, from Hami to the Caspian Sea, submitted to him The Han empire had now reached the borders of that of the Parthians, called An-li by the Chinese, and to the west of Parthia lay what the Chinese termed Ta Ch'in, which was the Roman empire, then at the zenith of its power

The Han conquest of Central Asia, a feat rivalling the greatest achievements of Rome, was undertaken partly for political reasons, but also to keep open the caravan routes so as to facilitate the lucrative export of silk from China to Western Asia and thence to Rome The Parthians were intermediaries in this commerce, since the trade route passed through their territories It was possibly on account of this, as well as through fear of an alliance between China and Rome, that when in A D 97 Pan Ch'ao sent Kan Ying on a mission to An Li and Ta Ch'in, the Parthians, by exaggerating the difficulties of the journey, persuaded the envoy to turn back when he had reached the Persian Gulf An alteration in the trade route would have deprived the Parthians of valuable profits After the return and death of Pan Ch'ao, in A D 102, a revolt broke out in Kashgaria against Chinese rule, but by A D 127 his son, Pan Yung, had crushed this and restored Chinese dominion No direct contact with Rome was established,

but the silk trade continued and Chinese power in Central Asia remained until after the fall of the later Han [1] The rise of a new people in Mongolia, the Hsien Pi, broke the power of the Hsiung Nu, many of whom entered the Chinese armies as mercenaries, or were settled as colonists in the northern provinces

The fall of the Eastern Han dynasty was due to an attempt on the part of the emperors to counterbalance the dangerous power of the relatives of their empresses by giving official positions and rank to the palace eunuchs By this means one great and ambitious family, the Liang, was destroyed in A D 159, in the reign of the Emperor Huan Ti, who then entrusted the eunuchs with great authority The remedy proved worse than the disease, for the eunuchs were the most avaricious of all and official appointments could be secured and held only by heavy bribes to them The magistrates naturally recouped themselves at the expense of the people and general maladministration and popular revolt followed The Confucian literati formed an association to check the power of the eunuchs, but the latter, in A D 168, persuaded the emperor to authorize the execution of the members of this group, and so became stronger than ever

In A D 184 a great popular revolt began, directed partly against the tyrannical eunuchs, but it also took the form of a Taoist uprising against Confucianism This rebellion was led by Chang Chueh, a Taoist magician, and seems to have originated as a popular religious and social movement against the crushing exactions of the government The followers of Chang were known as the Yellow Turbans from their distinguishing head-dress The armies raised to suppress this rebellion found themselves stinted of supplies and hampered in their movements by the greedy eunuchs, consequently they

[1] In 166 A D a group of merchants came to Loyang and represented themselves as an embassy from Rome

turned upon these parasites In A D 189, after the eunuchs had killed an influential general, Loyang was sacked by the troops, the eunuchs massacred and the emperor carried off as a virtual prisoner From this time the Han empire, while nominally continuing until A D 221, was rent by the struggles of the contending generals, and long centuries of civil strife began

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF DISUNITY AND REINTEGRATION

THE civil strife which followed the collapse of the Han empire resulted in the emergence of the famous Three Kingdoms of Wei, Shu-Han and Wu, immortalized in the historical romance entitled *San Kuo Chih Yen I*, or Story of the Three Kingdoms, which has provided a wealth of material for Chinese dramatists and story tellers Even to-day the leading figures of this period are as familiar to the Chinese theatre-goer as are his present political leaders Ts'ao Ts'ao, the epitome of ruthlessness, whose son, Ts'ao P'ei, made the last Han emperor in Loyang yield the throne, Liu Pei, of the Han royal line, who set up the Shu-Han dynasty in Szech'uan and whose burial mound near Chêngtu is still extant, Ch'u-ko Liang, whose military genius almost gave Shu-Han the victory over its rivals—all these are favourite subjects of the historical drama or novel

Of the three contending states, Wei, the strongest, held Kuanchung and Honei, Wu, the weakest, the fertile, but at that time thinly-peopled, lower valley of the Yangtze The heart of Shu-Han was in Szech'uan, which was becoming a rival in importance to the older key economic areas of the north The foundations of its agricultural wealth had been laid in the third century B C, when Li Ping, the Ch'in governor, cut a new course for the Min river at Kuanhsien and diverted its waters into a number of canals in order to irrigate the Chêngtu plain, which from that time has been one of the most

productive areas in China The settlement of Chinese colonists in Ch'in and Han times added to the aboriginal Ch'iang and Miao tribes the requisite agricultural population to exploit these resources In the reign of Han Chung Ti, 149–140 B C , Wen Wêng, another great provincial administrator, introduced an educational system which made Szech'uan a centre of culture and a training ground for scholarly officials The reforms of Wen Wêng, who is posthumously revered in Szech'uan as the god of literature, were an example to guide Wu Ti in his scholastic and educational policies

The Shu-Han dynasty established by Liu Pei had a better claim to legitimate rule than had its opponents, but the efforts of Ch'u-ko Liang to conquer Wei were baulked by the difficulty of transporting adequate military supplies from Szech'uan to the Wei valley and by the fabian policy of the Wei general, Ssŭ-ma Yi The death of Ch'u-ko Liang in 234, and the effete character of the successors of Liu Pei, caused the tide to turn in favour of Wei, which further augmented its resources by irrigation works in the Huai valley In 264 Wei conquered and annexed Shu-Han, and in the following year Ssŭ-ma Yen usurped the Wei throne and founded the Chin dynasty China was temporarily reunited in 280 by the Chin conquest of Wu The Chin emperor also re-asserted Chinese power in Central Asia, but he made the fatal error of dividing his empire into vassal kingdoms ruled by his numerous sons When Ssŭ-ma Yen died in 290 his successor was unable to make good his authority against his brothers, and fresh internal warfare ensued

This had momentous results, for at the opening of the fourth century a great politico-social uprising occurred in the northern provinces Since the first century B C Hsiung Nu settlers had formed a substantial element in the population of Shansi and Shensi, while Ssŭ-ma Yen had brought in large numbers of conquered Ch'iang

tribesmen, a people akin to the Tibetans, and had them settle as colonists in Kuanchung These non-Sinic groups were in a servile condition, and they now rose in revolt against the exactions of the imperial government and of the Chinese landowning gentry The Hsiung Nu leader, Liu Yuan, who claimed descent from the Han, proclaimed himself emperor in 308, and the discontented elements rallied to him In 311 the rebels took Loyang and five years later the same fate befell Ch'ang An Both cities were sacked and two successive Chin emperors fell into the hands of the rebels At the same time the Hsien Pi tribes overran what is now Hopei and established a state of their own there The whole north was lost to the Chin, who fled to Nanking, where a new emperor was set up There followed a general exodus of the wealthy classes among the Chinese, who migrated to the Yangtze valley and the south

From 316 to 589, while north China experienced the short-lived sway of successive non-Sinic peoples, the south remained under Chinese rule In 386 the Toba (T'u Pa), a people probably of Turkish stock, began a series of conquests at the expense of the Hsiung Nu and Hsien Pi In the course of a century they overran all China north of the Yangtze and established the Wei empire, with its capital at Loyang This endured as a unity until 534 when it split into the eastern and western Wei empires, the latter in 557 being overthrown by the ephemeral northern Chou dynasty In the south the Chin lasted until 419, and were then replaced by a series of short-lived dynasties all founded by military usurpation and brought to an end in a similar fashion

Far more important than these frequent political reversals of fortune were the social changes which took place during this period Of these one of the most significant was the infusion of new elements in the racial composition of the people of north China The barbarian irruption into this region, like the contemporary invasions

of the Roman empire, were but the culmination of a process which had been going on for centuries The Han emperors, like the Roman Cæsars, had from time to time brought in barbarian settlers to colonize ravaged areas, or to add a sturdy fighting stock to replace the wastage of civil and external warfare These tribes therefore formed a large proportion of the population even before the coming of the Toba added a new strain One Chinese chronicler estimated that half the population of Kuanchung was of Ch'iang stock at the time of the Chin dynasty The invasion of the Toba, who may not themselves have been very numerous, combined with the flight of many of the Chinese upper class, still further augmented the non-Sinic proportion of the inhabitants of north China A new ruling aristocracy, largely of barbarian origin, emerged out of the social chaos following the flight of the Chin

In the south, the continued existence of a truly Chinese empire, coupled with a great influx of refugees from the north, caused a rapid growth in the political, cultural and especially the economic importance of that region This centred in the lower Yangtze valley, the heart of the southern empire The previous relative scarcity of population had retarded the development of the Yangtze valley, but with effective colonization its innate fertility caused it to gain in agricultural resources until by the T'ang era it had emerged as the new key economic area Also, just as there was an intermingling of Sinic and non-Sinic stocks in the north, so in the south the Chinese immigrants, despite some attempts to preserve exclusiveness, intermixed with the aboriginal peoples

The four centuries between the end of the Han and the beginning of the T'ang dynasty saw not only considerable changes in the social composition of the Chinese people, but also the broadening of Sinic culture through the influx of foreign religious, intellectual and artistic influences It is a misnomer to speak of this

period as the Chinese Dark Ages, for no such decline in civilization took place in China as occurred in Europe after the fall of Rome The Hsiung Nu and Hsien Pi, who had for centuries been domiciled within or on the fringes of the Chinese empire, were admirers and imitators of Sinic culture The Toba in particular were patrons and preservers of the classical literature and adopted the language, customs and dress of the people they had conquered to the exclusion of their own The nomads, furthermore, had something to contribute, for they were in contact with Western Asian culture areas not only through the " silk route " via the Tarim basin, but also through the Siberian route north of the Altai, the importance of which will probably be better realized when archæological research has progressed further in that region The havoc caused by the invasion and uprising of the non-Sinic peoples could scarcely have been greater than that which accompanied the Ch'in conquests, and there was no anti-cultural Legist school to inaugurate a definite persecution of the literati At the same time the conquerors of north China showed themselves on the whole more receptive to foreign influences than were orthodox Chinese dynasties In the south Sinic culture took firmer root as a result of the migrations, and was also stimulated by the task of settling a virtually colonial area and by the greater facilities of overseas communication The breakdown of Han political unity involved that of the state-supported intellectual monopoly for which the Confucianists had striven, and thus the way was cleared for new enriching and invigorating forces from abroad

By far the most profound and enduring of these was that of Buddhism, which first came to China as early as 2 B C , from the Yueh Chih kingdom of Kushana Under the Han the new faith remained largely exotic and confined to court circles, but after the fall of the later Han its progress was rapid It possessed an attraction

for both rulers and people which Confucianism and Taoism lacked, for it had not only a wealth of elaborate ceremonial and an organized priesthood, but through the promise of salvation in a future existence it appealed to the multitudes overwhelmed by temporal misfortunes Its philosophic and metaphysical thinking was far in advance of Taoism and of interest even to Confucian scholars, who were attracted by its intellectual speculations even while they abhorred its religious and social influence Of the two great Buddhist sects, while the simpler Hinayana was known in China, the far more elaborate and eclectic Mahayana gained the stronger hold It came mainly through the Central Asian states where Iranian and Hellenistic influences affected both its religious teachings and the expression given them in art

The Confucianists, who disliked the monasticism, ascetic practices, and mystical tendencies of Buddhism, and the Taoists, who saw in it a dangerous rival in the popular affections, were occasionally able to set in motion local and temporary persecutions, but the political disunity prevented these from having any marked effect on the growth of the new faith, which between the third and the sixth centuries brought the majority of the Chinese people into its fold The Wei emperors were its enthusiastic patrons, as also were the rulers of the southern Chinese Liang dynasty Buddhist scriptures were brought in and translated by a host of missionaries of whom the most outstanding were Kumarajiva in the fourth century and Bodhidharma in the sixth Numerous Chinese converts also journeyed to India to obtain inspiration at the sources of the new faith and to secure fresh copies of its sacred works The best known of these was Fa Hsien, who in 399 left China and travelled to India by the Central Asian route, eventually returning from Ceylon by sea after an absence of fifteen years He thus added to the geographical knowledge of India

possessed by the Chinese, in addition to bringing back a great number of the Buddhist sacred canons

The conversion of China to Buddhism is often compared to the triumph of Christianity in Europe, but the differences are greater than the similarities Buddhism, coming from without the Chinese empire, brought not only a new faith, but a new intellectual and artistic stimulus It was more syncretic and less exclusive than Christianity, and it never succeeded in eliminating what it could not assimilate of the existing Sinic culture Confucianism remained the basis of the state educational system, and Taoism, by absorbing both the sacerdotal organization and much of the religious content of Buddhism, maintained its position side by side with the new faith In Europe one predominant religion destroyed what it could not absorb of other creeds and philosophies, with a consequent impoverishment of civilized life In China the interaction of three religious and intellectual systems strengthened and enriched her civilization, making it more cosmopolitan and less rigidly traditional than it had been under the Han The full fruition of this came in the T'ang era, but prior to that dynasty the capitals of the Wei emperors at Tat'ung and Loyang, where the Graeco-Buddhist sculptures of Tunhuang and Lungmên still bear witness to the genius of the age, were centres of art and culture So also was Nanking under the later Chin and the Emperor Liang Wu Ti, 502–549, during whose reign the city flourished as it was not to do again until the Ming era

From 589 to 618 China was temporarily reunited by the Sui dynasty, founded by Yang Chien and destroyed by the megalomania of his son Yang Ti The brief Sui period was marked by one great accomplishment, the Grand Canal, begun in the reign of Yang Chien, but largely constructed by Yang Ti Through the repair and enlargement of the extant canals and through linking them up by digging new ones, a continuous water route

was established between Hangchow and Loyang From Loyang to Ch'ang An water transportation was by way of the Yellow River and the Tungkuan-Ch'ang An canal, while another branch ran from Loyang to near where Peip'ing now stands The object of this great engineering feat was to ensure a steady flow of foodstuffs from the all-important Yangtze valley to Ch'ang An and Loyang, which remained the centres of political authority, and also to provide for the transport of armies and supplies between the northern political and the southern economic centres It was designed primarily to strengthen the position of the court and administration, not to benefit the people, upon whom the taxation and forced labour fell with crushing force When, in addition to this, Yang Ti plunged into an expensive and disastrous war in Korea, and also sustained reverses on the northwest frontier, a general revolt broke out against him, and in 618 he was murdered

Four years of renewed civil strife ended in the victory of Li Yuan, governor of what is now Shansi The Li family, which claimed a hypothetical descent from Lao-tzŭ, was of partly Chinese and partly Tartar ancestry Li Yuan himself, who became first emperor of the T'ang dynasty, was a mediocrity, and his success was mainly due to the genius of his second son, Li Shih-min, who in 627 become the Emperor T'ai-Tsung Pre-eminent as a soldier and administrator, T'ai Tsung reorganized the military and civil government of the empire He added greatly to the military and offensive power of the army by making the cavalry its most important arm, and was ably seconded in this work by a group of capable subordinates From the reign of T'ai Tsung until the great revolt in 755, the T'ang army was the most efficient and redoubtable in Eastern Asia In civil administration the measures adopted by T'ai Tsung did not differ fundamentally from those of the Han emperors He re-divided the empire into ten provinces, smaller in area

than those of the Han, with the usual subdivision into prefectures and districts The central government appointed the provincial officials and kept civil and military offices separate Thus, so long as the reforms of T'ai Tsung remained intact, the court retained full control over the provinces

Although the majority of the T'ang rulers were either Taoist or Buddhist in personal inclination, they extended the state educational and examination system of their predecessors, which continued to be mainly under Confucianist influence The curricula of the metropolitan and provincial colleges and schools included Taoist elements, while a literary education was far from being the only avenue to civil posts Military appointments remained on a different basis, and the T'ang empire, like that of the Han, was essentially military in character Buddhist influences may be discerned in the revised criminal code issued by T'ai Tsung, by which capital offences were reduced in number and the severity of other punishments lessened

The century following the death of T'ai Tsung in 649 was the most brilliant of the T'ang epoch, and perhaps marks the zenith of Chinese civilization Internal peace and unity were maintained, largely owing to the ability and longevity of the Empress Wu Hou Leaving the seclusion of a Buddhist nunnery to become the consort of the Emperor Kao Tsung, Wu Hou wielded the real power during the life-time of her husband and for long after his death She was one of the three great women rulers of China,[1] and successfully maintained her position until extreme old age, when in 705 a coup d'état deprived her of authority A short period of intrigue and disorder ended in 712 with the accession of the Emperor Hsuan Tsung, who proved a capable ruler until middle age, when he became infatuated with the beautiful Yang Kuei-fei

[1] The others were the Empress Lu, wife of Han Kao Tzŭ, and the famous Empress Tz'ŭ Hsi of the Ch'ing Dynasty

Beneath the outward strength and brilliance of the T'ang period there lurked grave weaknesses which were eventually to prove fatal. Of these the most enduring and fundamental was the parasitic nature of the capital and court in relation to society as a whole. Although Kuanchung was by now definitely inferior to the Yangtze valley in economic importance, the T'ang retained their capital at Ch'ang An. There was reason for this from the military standpoint, since Ch'ang An was located near to the northwest frontier, whence the main danger of invasion might be expected. Despite the Grand Canal system, which the T'ang maintained and improved, the task of feeding the great city of over a million inhabitants was an extremely difficult one, and was, moreover, a continual drain on the eastern and southern provinces, thus tending to foster separatist feeling. For the numerous members of the imperial family, the court nobility as a whole and the growing scholar class were all largely exempt from taxation, and were allotted the revenues of certain districts as a source of income. Therefore the brilliant military and cultural achievements of the T'ang were offset by the exploitation of the provinces by a privileged few. Hence the same social and economic causes which worked to undermine previous dynasties also operated in the case of the T'ang and were to continue throughout the whole imperial epoch. As the mental and moral fibre of the dominant group weakened, so the burdens on society grew until an upheaval resulted and a new governing class replaced the old, when the process would be repeated.

The vigorous expansionist policy of T'ai Tsung and his successors ultimately accentuated the rate of decline. In the sixth century Turkish peoples from the Altai region had moved south and established a vast empire from Mongolia to Transoxiana. They later split into two tribal confederacies, the Western Turks in Transoxiana and the Ili valley, and the Eastern ones

in the valleys of the Orkhon and Selenga rivers These eastern Turks continually harassed the border provinces of the empire, and on more than one occasion nearly took Ch'ang An itself T'ai Tsung and his successors broke the Turkish power by a mixture of force and statecraft The Uighurs were detached from the Eastern Turkish confederacy, which was then defeated and its territory annexed The Western Turkish group was crushed by a similar combination of war and diplomacy and Chinese power maintained through the client tribes of the Uighur and the Karluk With the Turkish power thus brought under control, the way was open for the reassertion of Chinese supremacy in Kashgaria Here two fresh perils arose, the growth of a strong Tibetan kingdom which disputed the control of Central Asia with the T'ang, and the overthrow of the Persian kingdom by the Arabs, who at the opening of the eighth century penetrated into Transoxiana and menaced the city states of Kashgaria which were under Chinese suzerainty In 747 Kao Chien-shih, a Korean general in the Chinese service, led an army from Kashgar across the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush to prevent a threatened junction between the Tibetans and the Arabs He was successful in this, but his own cupidity caused a revolt of the Karluk against him, and in 751 his whole army was destroyed by an Arab-Karluk force at the battle of Atlah The T'ang power in Central Asia collapsed, the Karluk and the Uighur sharing predominance there So strong did the latter people become that from clients of the empire they rose to be its preservers

The T'ang expansion in Central Asia was justified by the necessity of destroying the dangerous Turkish power and of maintaining the "silk route" to the west, but the revival by T'ai Tsung of the foolish policy of Yang Ti in attempting to crush Kogoryu, and to assert Chinese supremacy in Korea, was a grave error T'ai Tsung failed to reduce the stubborn kingdom, but Kao

Tsung, in alliance with Sinlo, destroyed first Paikche and then Kogoryu, annexing the two latter and securing a recognition of suzerainty from the first The results achieved were of short duration and not worth the expense involved, while the destruction of Kogoryu aided the rise in Liaotung of the K'itans, who were to prove far more dangerous to the empire In southwest China the strong kingdom of Nantao, in what is now Yunnan, resisted all the T'ang efforts to subdue it

The first great disaster to the T'ang empire was brought about through the folly of Hsuan Tsung His immediate predecessor had initiated the dangerous practice of conferring both military and civil authority upon the administrators of frontier districts Hsuan Tsung continued this, and in particular heaped power and honours upon a general of Turkish extraction, An Lu-shan, who had repelled K'itan raids on the northeast frontier and who had gained the confidence of the favourite Yang Kuei-fei In 755 An Lu-shan revolted and was supported by the northeastern provinces, disaffected at the exactions of the T'ang court In the following year the rebels took Ch'ang An, and Hsuan Tsung, forced by his own mutinous soldiery to deliver Yang Kuei-fei to execution, fled to Szech'uan Broken by misfortune, he abdicated, the throne passing to one of his sons The T'ang fortunes were restored by the generals Kuo Tzŭ-i and Li Kuang-pi, who summoned the Uighurs as well as Arab and other mercenaries to the aid of the loyalists An Lu-shan was murdered by his own son, who shortly after was in turn killed by another pretender to the throne The T'ang forces, profiting by these dissensions among the rebels, retook Ch'ang An, but had then a further menace to face in the invasion by the Tibetans, who raided and sacked Ch'ang An in 763 A coalition between the T'ang, the Caliphate, and the Nantao kingdom eventually forced the Tibetans to retreat By 766 the revolt had been crushed and external

enemies driven back, but the T'ang empire was never the same again The splendid regular army built up by T'ai Tsung was destroyed, and henceforth the T'ang depended on the Uighur alliance and on foreign mercenary forces Furthermore the T'ang dynasty had been saved by the military commanders, and they had to be given ample rewards for their services and to ensure their continued loyalty The empire was divided into military districts, each ruled by a general who was superior to the civil officials and who wielded complete power in his area

For about a century and a half after the revolt of An Lu-shan the T'ang empire remained outwardly united, but actually grew steadily feebler The south had not suffered from the ravages of this uprising, and had the T'ang removed from Ch'ang An to Nanking, in the heart of the new key economic area, they might have gained sufficient strength to reduce the military governors to obedience and to reconstitute an independent civil administration in the provinces, but none of the later emperors had much ability or insight The capital remained in the now impoverished Kuanchung, liable to be deprived of its vital food supplies by a revolt which would cut it off from the Yangtze The military governors steadily grew in power, and in many cases made their commands hereditary, having more to fear from their own subordinate officers than from the weakening imperial authority Externally the Uighur alliance remained the greatest safeguard of the T'ang until the overthrow of the Uighurs by the Kirghiz in 840 The Tibetans, rendered less warlike by Buddhist influences and harassed by internal dissensions, ceased to be a menace after the middle of the ninth century

The end of the T'ang came about through a fresh internal rebellion which began in 868 in the south and gradually spread throughout the empire In 875 the insurgents in Hopei and Shantung found a leader in

Huang Ch'ao, who marched throughout the empire to Canton, which he sacked, and then turned north to take Loyang and Ch'ang An in 880–1 The imperial court fled, and appealed for aid to a Turkish chieftain, Li K'o-yung He retook Ch'ang An and as a reward was given the province of Shansi Chu Wên, a lieutenant of Huang Ch'ao, went over to the imperialists and received an equally large territory in Honei Huang Ch'ao was defeated and reduced to suicide, but Li K'o-yung and Chu Wên were now the real masters of the empire In 907 the latter deposed the T'ang ruler and proclaimed himself emperor at K'aifêng

The outstanding characteristic of civilization during the T'ang era was its cosmopolitanism Foreign commerce, bringing in its train fresh religious and cultural influences, made Ch'ang An the meeting place of merchants, missionaries and scholars from almost all the races of Asia Both the Central Asian land routes and the sea route from India to south China were important in this respect Canton rose to be a flourishing port with a large foreign community, and prospered until it was sacked by the rebels under Huang Ch'ao The T'ang emperors, who were themselves of partly foreign origin, as a rule treated all incoming strangers with courtesy and foreign creeds with tolerance The Confucianists, Taoists and Buddhists still retained their mutual animosities, and also were apt to unite temporarily against some new faith, but the persecutions they inspired were of short duration

During the reign of T'ai Tsung, Mazdaism entered China from Persia and was well received by the emperor, who was on friendly terms with the Sassanid rulers of Persia Mazdean priests were allowed to remain in Ch'ang An and to erect pyres Even after the overthrow of the Sassanids by the Arabs the Mazdean faith continued to be tolerated in China, although it is uncertain how far it ever spread beyond the Persian

merchants and refugees in the T'ang capital It was also in the reign of T'ai Tsung that Nestorian Christianity first reached China This creed centred in Assyria from whence it spread over western Asia to Transoxiana, and is said to have been introduced into China by the monk Alopen in 635 T'ai Tsung issued an edict in its favour and permitted the construction of a church in Ch'ang An The Empress Wu Hou, a fervent Buddhist, persecuted the Nestorians, but under Hsuan Tsung and his successors they were again in favour and appear to have become exceedingly influential In 781 the famous Nestorian Tablet was erected at Ch'ang An, the inscription on which contains a history of the movement in China, a statement of its doctrines and a eulogy of its imperial protectors Traces of it have also been found at Tun-huang on the northwest frontier of China, and in Szech'uan It continued to flourish until 845 when the Taoist Emperor Wu Tsung ordered its suppression, in common with other foreign faiths The probability is that it was not so much this persecution, which was brief, as the disorders following the downfall of the T'ang and the separation of the Nestorians in China from their co-religionists in western Asia which caused the temporary disappearance of the faith in China The same is possibly true of Manichaeanism, which made its appearance in China towards the end of the seventh century, and, while not regarded with favour by the Chinese emperors, was perforce tolerated because the powerful Uighur people became converted to it at the time of the rebellion of An Lu-shan When the Uighur power was broken a persecution was initiated in China against the Manichaeans but they seem to have remained numerous, especially in Fukien The Mohammedan and Jewish faiths also appear to have entered China during the T'ang period, but their influence did not spread beyond the Moslem and Jewish merchant communities in Ch'ang An and Canton

The T'ang was the great age of Buddhism in China

Despite occasional persecutions, instigated by Taoists or Confucianists, its hold upon the people was never shaken Chinese pilgrims, of whom the most notable was Hsuan Tsang, continued to visit India, and Indian missionaries to come to China But the most important development in Chinese Buddhism was the growth of various sects and the slow transformation of Buddhist ideas by the influence of Sinic thought The original Sinic civilization, at first submerged under the new faith, reasserted itself during the T'ang epoch and, while taking much from Buddhism, steadily modified that religion to suit the Chinese environment The chief Buddhist schools in China were the Ch'an (Zen) or contemplative school, supposedly founded by Bodhidharma, which subordinated prayer, ascetic practices, and good works to inward meditation and, therefore, easily harmonized with Taoism , the T'ien T'ai school, which laid stress on instruction in the scriptures and ritual, and was the scholarly and philosophical sect, not uninfluenced by Confucianism , and the so-called " Pure Land " school, whose central doctrine was the worship of Amida Buddha, through whom came salvation All three were ultimately largely transformed and conditioned in their development by the pre-existing Sinic philosophies

The same tendencies are discernable in art and literature The Han period had seen the beginnings of Hellenistic and Iranian influences on Chinese art , and with the growth of Buddhism, especially under the Wei, came the sculptured Buddhas and Bodhisatvas expressive of the asceticism and meditative spirit of the Indian faith, rather than of the Hellenic love of form and beauty This religious art continued under the T'ang, but there also grew up a lay sculpture, of which the six chargers of T'ai Tsung are the most famous example, marked by its realism and by the vigour of a forceful and expanding empire T'ang statuary and figurines intended for burial with the dead attained a higher level of artistic perfection

than any of the sculptural work, because they were expressions not of an alien religious ideal, but of the everyday activities of the people In painting, also, the genius of Wu Tao-tzŭ was never subsequently equalled Li Ssŭ-hsun, Li Chao-tou and Han Kan were the leading figures of the " northern school " which was marked by vigour of design and richness of colour The " southern school," of which the chief exponent was Wang Wei, produced works more delicate in touch and subdued in colour

The T'ang period saw Chinese poetry at its highest, and in particular the reign of Hsuan Tsung was given lustre by the two greatest among many Chinese poets, Li Po and Tu Fu They sang the glories of Ch'ang An and its brilliant court, but Taoist and Buddhist influences, as well as the disastrous end of the reign, combine to produce in their verses an undercurrent of melancholy, of feeling for the sufferings of the masses, and especially of the futility and ephemeral nature of all worldly ambitions Throughout their work was a deep appreciation of the beauties of nature, a sensibility which was purely Sinic in origin The syncretic character of T'ang culture is nowhere better revealed than in this, its highest product

In prose writing, and particularly in philosophical works, Buddhist scholars surpassed all others, but towards the end of the T'ang dynasty some decline in the vigour and originality of Buddhist thought can be discerned Buddhism was in decay in India and little of real value could be drawn from that source after the ninth century, while in China the resurgence of Sinism was having its slow but sure effect The later T'ang period saw a revival of Confucianist prose literature, of which that of Han Yu, 768–824, the deadly enemy of Buddhism, reached the highest standard The increase in literary output and the popular demand, especially for religious literature in the shape of prayers and charms, appears to have stimulated the invention of block-printing The

Chinese had long discovered the manufacture of paper and ink,[1] but the circulation of manuscripts had hitherto been among a limited scholarly circle While the origins of printing are uncertain, it seems to have been in the T'ang period that printing by wooden blocks was first utilized although it was not until later dynasties that the printed book became general The Confucianists, who prided themselves on their skill with the *pi*, or writing-brush, for long opposed the application of the new method to the classics

[1] Ink was made from a mixture of wood ash and glutinous substances Paper, fabricated from rags, rice-straw, the bark of the mulberry tree or from hemp, first appeared in the Eastern Han period and slowly replaced the old bamboo slips The inscription of the classics and other works on stone was a feature of the Wei and T'ang eras

CHAPTER V

THE AGE OF NOMADIC SUPREMACY

THE fall of the T'ang empire resulted in a further period of disunity and civil strife, although this was of relatively short duration During the first half of the tenth century the imperial style was assumed by successive military adventurers, mostly of Turkish origin, whose brief reigns are dignified by the term "Five Dynasties" None of these ephemeral sovereigns brought all even of northern China under their sway, while the south and west remained independent of them and divided into various kingdoms in which the cultural traditions of the T'ang were better preserved than in the north

Thus in China the centrifugal forces temporarily triumphed over the centripetal, but in Manchuria and Mongolia a contrary process was taking place In these regions the various Turkish, Mongol and Tungus peoples were each normally divided into clan and tribal units, often hostile to each other and incapable of collective action It was the object of Chinese statecraft to keep them in this condition by encouraging their mutual animosities, playing off one group against another and breaking up any dangerous confederation among them so as to preserve the integrity of China and her suzerainty over the steppe lands A leader of genius and ambition among the nomads inevitably came into conflict with the Chinese empire, since his object was to unite the tribes under his banner and to maintain his rule by diverting them from their usual local wars for grazing grounds or flocks to a raid or a war of conquest upon the rich and settled lands to the south From the tenth

to the thirteenth centuries a number of such chiefs arose among the nomadic peoples, while China remained either disunited or under the feeble rule of incompetent emperors Consequently wave after wave of invasion broke upon the country, ending in complete political conquest by the Mongols

At the opening of the tenth century the K'itan, a Mongol-Tungusic people, who had settled around the Liao River, in Manchuria, were united under King Apaoki By 926 they had taken southern Manchuria from the Chinese, had spread into Inner Mongolia and were threatening what are now the provinces of Hopei and Shansi The northern portions of these two areas were ceded to the K'itan in 936 by Shih Ching-t'ang, whom they had helped to usurp the Chinese throne Two years later they moved their capital to Yenching (Peip'ing) and their ruler assumed the title of emperor While the K'itan were advancing into China from the northeast, on the northwest the Hsi Hsia, a people akin to the Tibetans, established themselves in what is now Kansu The Hsi Hsia had attained a considerable degree of culture and possessed a script of their own, fragments of which survive, but have not yet been fully deciphered

The conquest of north China by the K'itan and Hsi Hsia was temporarily checked by the restoration of political unity under Chao K'uang-yin, who in 960 became the first emperor of the Sung dynasty The Emperor T'ai Tsŭ, as he was later known, was a skilful general and an able statesman He easily annexed most of the states of southern and western China, since the T'ang tradition of unity was still potent in those regions, and then turned his attention to the problem of securing his dynasty on a firmer basis than those which had preceded it since the fall of the T'ang The chief menace lay in the independent power of the local military commanders, and to remove this T'ai Tsŭ not only persuaded those generals who had been immediately

responsible for his successful usurpation to retire in return for rich gifts of lands and honours, but also greatly reduced the freedom of action of the army leaders, who could henceforth do little without the consent of the central government Furthermore, Tai Tsŭ and his successors, in their reorganization of the imperial administration, made the civil officials superior in status to the military The Confucianist schools were restored and increased, while entrance to the civil service was reserved to those who had been trained in these schools and been successful in the examinations Thus, while the Han and T'ang dynasties had been predominantly military in character, the Sung period was marked by the ascendancy of the Confucianist civil bureaucracy, and it is from this epoch that the notion of the unworthiness of the military career and the merits of the scholarly and pacifist official became general This belief had for long been held by the Confucianists, and its influence was strengthened by Buddhist and Taoist teachings It was to permeate future Chinese thought with disastrous consequences to the military efficiency of the empire

The measures adopted by T'ai Tsŭ did indeed secure a long lease of life to his dynasty, the northern Sung enduring until 1127 and the southern until 1276 But whereas the fall of the Han and T'ang dynasties had been partly due to the overstraining of their resources by wars of conquest, that of the Sung came about largely through neglect of the army in time of peace and through undue control by civilian ministers of the generals sent against the nomads The deficiencies of Confucianism were responsible for this, for the idea that the benevolence of the ruler would secure the peace and integrity of the empire was of little avail against a barbarian foe, while the curriculum of the schools, which mainly consisted of memorizing the classics, was a poor training for the task of solving the political, social and economic problems of the day

The external record of the Sung was therefore from the first an inglorious one Defeated by the K'itan and the Hsi Hsia, they were obliged to purchase peace by the payment of a heavy tribute in silver and silk to both these peoples The Hsi Hsia remained in occupation of Kansu and part of Shensi, the K'itan in northern Hopei and Shansi Quarrels between the Hsi Hsia and the emperors of the Liao dynasty, as the K'itan rulers termed themselves, helped to ease the pressure on the Sung The K'itan had also to fear the Juchên, a Tungusic people who dwelt in the Sungari and Amur Valleys They therefore contented themselves with the exaction of tribute and the recognition by the Sung ruler of the titular supremacy of the Liao emperors [1]

The heavy incidence of the tribute added to the financial and economic problems which faced the Sung Their capital, Pien-liang (K'aifêng), in Honan, was well placed strategically and protected by the Yellow River, and was nearer the rich southern provinces than Ch'ang An But the task of raising and transporting supplies to the capital remained a burden, which was increased by the extravagance of the Sung court A further difficulty lay in the growing list of tax exemptions, which included the court and official classes, the Confucianist scholars and the Buddhist and Taoist temple lands This added to the financial stringency of the government and to the distress of the peasantry, who also suffered from the increasing exhaustion of the soil in the older settled regions around the capital They were compelled to resort to usurers in order to meet their obligations, and the extent to which they were exploited is revealed by the issue of ineffective edicts forbidding the exaction of more than a hundred per cent interest Many farmers left their holdings, thus adding to the prevalent misery

[1] "Cathay," the name by which China was known in mediæval Europe, is a corruption of K'itan The Russians still call China "Kitái"

and social unrest The Sung court and officialdom, which failed to give security against the invader, was as much an incubus upon the provinces as had been any of its predecessors

The sixth Sung Emperor, Shen Tsung, 1068–1085, was anxious to eradicate these evils, and to this end appointed as chief minister Wang An-shih, a man of remarkable keenness of mind and practical ability who had already won a name for himself as a reforming magistrate Although a Confucian scholar and an able, but unorthodox, commentator on the classics, Wang An-shih seems to have been influenced by Legist ideas The basic object of his reforms was to give the empire a sound financial system, a contented peasantry and an efficient army He effected economies in expenditure, re-organized the budget and reduced the cost of grain transportation to the capital Commerce was strictly controlled and made to augment the income of the state, while the land tax was made more equitable, being apportioned according to the fertility of the soil The peasantry were released from the corvée or forced labour on public works, for which was substituted a graduated poll tax In order to free the farmers from the clutches of the money lenders Wang An-shih instituted government loans at moderate interest on the security of the harvests Other reforms included the organization of groups, the members of which were mutually responsible for crimes committed within their circle, and the promotion of horse breeding in the northern provinces of the Sung empire, so as to provide an effective cavalry force against the K'itans

These measures aroused fierce opposition among the vested interests which they disturbed They were denounced as innovations by the conservative clique among the Confucian scholars, headed by the historian Ssŭ-ma Kuang. Personal dislike of Wang An-shih, who was of an overbearing disposition, and antagonism to

his interpretations of the classics and reform of the curricula of the schools, sharpened the conflict But the main obstacle to success was the attitude of the administrative officials through whom alone could the reforms be carried out and who were interested in preserving the very evils which Wang An-shih was trying to abolish His efforts resulted in some amelioration of agrarian conditions during his tenure of office, but, upon the death of Shen Tsung, Ssŭ-ma Kuang and the reactionaries came into power and abolished the reforms

Wang An-shih himself denied that his measures were new, and, in fact, most of them had been in force during previous dynasties, though not so completely or systematically He based them on the *Chou Li*, which was supposedly a record of the political, social and economic methods of the Chou dynasty, though actually compiled much later Wang An-shih died in 1086, but in 1194 another reversal of political fortune brought his followers into power, and until the end of the northern Sung the bureaucracy was rent by the struggles of the two parties The consequent uncertainty and vacillations of Sung economic and social policy vitiated whatever good the reforms had effected and added to the confusion and distress of the people Thus, through no fault of his own, the measures of Wang An-shih ended in the weakening of the Sung empire and in leaving it a prey to renewed nomad onslaughts

In 1114 Akouta, King of the Juchên, revolted against the K'itan and attacked the Liao empire The K'itan emperors had become Sinicized, and were unable to withstand the onslaught of the ruder and fiercer Juchên Peking fell in 1123 and the K'itan, attacked on the south by the Sung, who thought to recover their lost territories, were soon completely conquered One K'itan prince escaped from the débâcle and, finding aid among the Uighur, was able to carve out a state for himself in Turkestan, the Kara K'itan, or Black Cathayan kingdom.

The Juchên ruler assumed the title of emperor, and gave to his dynasty the name of Chin or Golden

The Sung soon regretted their folly in helping the Chin against the K'itan In 1125 war broke out between the Chin and Sung, and in the next year the Chin took K'aifêng and captured the Sung emperor, Hui Tsung, and his elder son A younger son fled to Nanking and was proclaimed emperor in that city But the victorious Chin pressed southwards, crossed the Yangtze, took Nanking and Hangchow in 1139 and appeared about to make an end of the Sung An able Chinese general, Yo Fei, stopped the rout, and in 1130 the Chin were forced back across the Yangtze A few years later the Sung seemed on the point of reconquering the north, when the Chin were attacked in their turn by the Mongols But a ministerial intrigue caused the execution of Yo Fei, the Chin freed themselves from the Mongol menace by stirring up the Tatars against them, and in 1141 the Sung emperor was glad to conclude a definitive peace The Chin occupation of north China was legitimized, their emperors were recognized as titularly superior to the Sung, and a large annual tribute was paid to them

The southern Sung established their capital at Hangchow, and the heart of Sinic civilization was now definitely in the Yangtze region The long process of migration from north to south, which had been going on since the fall of the Han, was accentuated by the K'itan and Chin invasions This increase of population in the Yangtze valley led to a demand for fresh land, which in the more thickly settled regions was met by the draining of pools and lakes or by the construction of dikes and ditches to dam or draw off water, so as to secure the fertile "lake-bottom" land This process was not without its benefits, but the rich official and land-owning classes, in their greed for more land, were heedless of the need of their poorer neighbours for proper irrigation and flood control Thus a new abuse was

added to those which Wang An-shih had vainly striven to remove, nor could the effete Sung emperors do anything to check it, since their edicts were disregarded by the very officials whose duty it was to enforce them but who were the prime offenders in this matter

Although maritime contacts with foreign lands increased during the Sung period they led to no such stimulation of intellectual or cultural life as had been the case in the T'ang epoch Buddhism was declining in India, from which it was eventually to disappear almost entirely Indian civilization was being threatened by the Turkish invasions and henceforth contributed little of real cultural value The loss of north China partly blocked the land routes to western Asia, and there also the weakening of the Abbaside Caliphate and the defeat of the Byzantines by the Seljuk Turks caused a general fall in the cultural level of these regions China was, therefore, intellectually isolated, with the result that the truly Sinic elements in her civilization asserted themselves against the alien importations under the Wei and T'ang

The Sung Confucianists, in order to divest the classical literature of what they regarded as unsound accretions, devoted themselves to historical research and criticism The general history of China from the Chou period to the beginning of the Sung dynasty, compiled by Ssŭ-ma Kuang, the great opponent of Wang An-shih, was the model for several shorter works of the same character Local history and topographical descriptions also flourished, while keen interest was taken in archæological research The work of the Sung scholars in these fields, while conditioned by a conscious effort to restore the true Confucian tradition and therefore largely ignoring the actual historical evolution which had taken place, was of a high order and of invaluable service in preserving the records of the past

The great object of the Sung scholars was to meet the challenge of Buddhism and Taoism by a restatement

of Confucianist philosophy, which should make clear the rational basis not only of politics and society but also of the origins and nature of the universe They aimed at a complete refutation of the theistic and supernatural tenets of the great religious systems, and at demonstrating that the Confucianist family and social relationships, in contrast to the monasticism and ascetic practices of the Buddhists and Taoists, were alone derived from an undeviating and eternal law of nature

Since these were matters with which Confucius had not been primarily concerned, the Sung scholars were in fact innovators, although they maintained that they were expounding the pure Confucianist doctrines and rectifying the errors of their predecessors What they actually did was to take excerpts from certain ancient books of philosophy and divination and elevate them to a wholly unwonted importance Thus Shao Yang and Chou Tun-i, eleventh-century philosophers of the northern Sung period, found in the *I Ching* an obscure reference to *T'ai Ch'i*, the Supreme Ultimate, which they interpreted as the primary cause of the universe and the natural law underlying and conditioning all phenomena Chu Hsi, 1130–1200, the greatest of the neo-Confucianist school, expanded the work of his predecessors into a complete philosophical system He held that the true character of the fundamental natural and moral law was to be discerned, not by the intuitive processes favoured by the Ch'an Buddhists, but through the "investigation of things," a phrase he borrowed from the "Great Learning," a hitherto unimportant treatise ascribed to the Chou period, and forming a part of the *Li Chi* Chu Hsi followed Mencius in regarding the character of man as fundamentally good Evil arose through a neglect of the true nature of man, and this was to be avoided by following the doctrine of the mean, which Chu Hsi found in another ancient work . Men should avoid excess and dissipation on the one hand and ascetic practices on the other

By performing their duties to the family and to society they acted in conformity with the natural order of things Thus Sung Confucianism, which remained an essentially social philosophy, combated the individualist and nihilistic tendencies of Buddhism and Taoism and, while unable to eradicate the influence of these religions upon the mass of the people, ultimately moulded the outlook and policy of the Sinic governing class Consequently the conquest of all China by the Mongols did not result in the disintegration of Chinese culture as it otherwise might have done, and the achievement of the Sung philosophers made certain the ultimate victory of Sinic civilization

During most of the Sung period itself the Confucianists were divided into several antagonistic groups The doctrines of Chu Hsi were rejected by the intuitive school among the philosophic reformers and also by those who challenged his views on the nature of man Political differences envenomed the academic disputes and Chu Hsi died in virtual disgrace, with his teachings excluded from the examination courses and his disciples disqualified for office Not until the reign of the Emperor Li Tsung, 1225–1264, was his memory rehabilitated and his teaching elevated to the standard of orthodoxy It had already been received with acclaim by the Chin, and was to some extent patronized by the Mongol rulers in their efforts to conciliate the literati

Neo-Confucianism, while indubitably influenced by Buddhist and Taoist thought and, in the case of Chu Hsi, perhaps also by Manichaeanism, was not consciously syncretic It was reactionary in purpose and remained primarily ethical rather than religious in character The stress laid by Chu Hsi upon the investigation of things might have given it a scientific trend, but later commentators interpreted this phrase in a subjective, not an objective, sense, and confined it to the things of the mind, not to natural phenomena Such opposition as

arose came from the intuitive school, of whom the greatest representative was the Ming philosopher Wang Yang-ming The alchemistic practices of the Taoists, from which true science might have sprung, tended to become metaphysical under the influence of Buddhism[1] These developments prevented the growth of a scientific method in China, such as ultimately re-emerged in Western Europe

The Sung rulers, like their predecessors of the T'ang era, were great art patrons Hui Tsung, the emperor who saw the downfall of the northern Sung at the hands of the Chin, was himself a painter who instituted an academy of painting and calligraphy and even held examinations in these The court at K'aifêng was a centre of the arts, and their patronage was continued by the emperors of the southern Sung dynasty at Hangchow Sung painting, particularly of landscapes, is especially famous The works of Li Ch'eng and Li Lung-mien under the northern Sung and of Ma Yuan and Hsia Kuei under the southern are the outstanding among a galaxy of great names But Sung art lacks the vigour of conception and design, if also the exaggeration, of the T'ang period It is more delicate, refined and conventional, indicative of a sophisticated and somewhat decadent society Much of it is devoted to the rather overrated scenic beauty of Hangchow No Sung artist equalled the genius of Wu Tao-tzŭ, still less did any poet arise to compare with Tu Fu

The Sung period is remarkable for its porcelain ware, which was also a special concern of the emperors True porcelain was produced under the T'ang, and the potteries continued in Honan and Hopei in early Sung times Hui Tsung established kilns at K'aifêng, which became a centre of the art until the Chin conquest This disaster resulted in a migration of the skilled potters to the southern provinces, but until the Ming era their

[1] Waley, A., *The Travels of an Alchemist*, pp 11–13

products did not quite equal those of the north, probably owing to difficulty in obtaining suitable clays

At the opening of the thirteenth century the Sung emperors, engrossed in art patronage and in philosophical disputation, were neglectful alike of the economic welfare of their subjects and of the defences of their empire The Chin dynasty was also weakening, for the Juchên themselves were numerically few in relation to the subject Chinese and K'itan population, among whom there was considerable disaffection The usual process of Sinicization was going on among the invaders, despite edicts of the Chin emperors intended to check this They were also faced with economic and social difficulties, some of which came from the reluctance of nomadic tribes to settle down as peaceful agriculturalists and others from the greed of the Chin aristocracy Consequently both empires, while presenting an imposing front, were ill-prepared to stand the shock of the Mongol onslaught

The Mongols were a group of clans and tribes dwelling in the valleys of the Onon, Kerulen and Argun rivers They were, and are, pastoralists, their wealth consisting in their flocks and herds, and their frequent wars were mainly for the limited grazing areas of Outer Mongolia A brave and hardy people, born horsemen and skilled archers, they formed a potentially dangerous fighting force While not the absolute savages they have sometimes been pictured, they were uncultured and illiterate, being at a lower level in this respect than their Turkish neighbours the Kerait, Naiman, and especially the relatively civilized Uighurs Their religion was a superstitious Shamanism, and their social organization essentially aristocratic in nature Such were the people who, in the latter half of the twelfth century, were united under the leadership of Temujin, *c* 1155–1227, best known by his title of Chingiz Khan

In 1211 Chingiz attacked the Chin empire Weakened by repeated defeats and by the desertion to the Mongols

of many of their K'itan subjects, the Chin abandoned Peking, which fell to Chingiz in 1215 Events in Central Asia diverted his main forces to the west and began the great advance which within thirty years brought the Mongol horsemen to the shores of the Adriatic The last campaign of Chingiz himself was against the Hsi Hsia, who were utterly destroyed, the havoc wrought leaving this flourishing country a prey to the encroaching desert Ogodai, the successor of Chingiz, took K'aifêng in 1233, and made an end of the Chin empire The short-sighted Sung rulers had helped the Mongols to do this, and were in their turn attacked Succession disputes among the Mongols, the barrier presented by the Yangtze River, the stout resistance offered by numerous walled cities and the unsuitability of southern China for cavalry operations, all combined to lengthen the war, but under Kubilai Khan, 1259–1294, it was brought to a victorious conclusion By 1279 all China was under his control

The Mongol rulers realized that in order to organize an effective administration in the countries they had conquered they must utilize the best talents from among their subject peoples They were profoundly influenced by the more civilized Kerait, Uighur and K'itan, whom Chingiz especially favoured The Kerait had been converted to Nestorian Christianity at the opening of the eleventh century, and their king who was overthrown by Chingiz was the "Prester John" of mediæval European legend Nestorianism and Buddhism had largely displaced the Manichaean faith among the Uighur, and the Mongol upper classes were in consequence much influenced by these religions Taoism also attracted the attention of the Khans, and Ch'ang-ch'un, a famous Taoist mystic, journeyed from China to Turkestan in 1220–2, at the express invitation of Chingiz The Khans were tolerant as a matter of policy, since by employing foreigners of differing faiths they could play off one group against the other and have no fear for their own authority The

Mongols, who previously had no written language, in the time of Chingiz adopted the alphabet of the Uighur as the basis of one of their own The K'itan also played their part in the spread of cultural and mollifying influences among the Mongols, and Yeliu Chu-tsai, a K'itan noble, became the chief counsellor of Chingiz and of Ogodai It was due to his advice that the invaders abandoned their original intention of massacring the agricultural population of north China to make room for pasture lands, and he persuaded Ogodai to spare K'aifêng instead of applying the usual Mongol rule of destroying all cities which afforded any resistance From western Asia and eastern Europe the Khans also secured skilled siege engineers, financiers, a whole group of Alans or Georgians, to serve as their personal bodyguard, and many others of use to them in the immense task of governing an empire which embraced the greater part of Asia The conquest of north China brought the Mongols into contact with Sinic civilization, but the influence upon them of the Central Asian peoples outweighed that of the Chinese

Kubilai adopted a materially different policy from that of the preceding Khans They were primarily Mongol chieftains, with their capital at Karakorum, he ruled as a Chinese emperor, the founder of the Yuan dynasty, and in 1264 established his capital at Cambaluc (Peking) At the same time he remained the Great Khan, direct ruler of all China and Mongolia, and suzerain of the lesser Khanates This double rôle proved difficult to sustain, and was one of the causes of the swift break-up of the Mongol empire The Sinicizing tendencies of Kubilai offended the conservative group among the Mongols who clung to the *Yasak* or precepts of Chingiz He had warned against removing the capital from Mongolia, which he meant should remain the heart of his dominions Kubilai, by altering this rule, brought about a prolonged rebellion in Mongolia and, as Chingiz

had foreseen, jeopardized the future of his dynasty by surrounding it with the enervating ceremonial and luxury of a Chinese court

Despite the personal tendencies of Kubilai, the Mongol period represented the greatest menace that Sinic civilization had yet encountered Society was organized on a hierarchical basis At the top were the Mongols themselves, and next in status came the kindred nomad peoples These were the ruling groups and the Chinese were subject to them, the northerners, owing to the large K'itan element among them, faring better than the southerners The Confucianist literati were displaced from their former position as teachers and administrators, and the examinations were for a while totally abolished Even when these were renewed, the non-Sinic proportion of candidates was made much greater than the Chinese Furthermore, the Mongol administration was largely staffed by foreigners Uighurs and Moslems formed a considerable element in the civil service, while other non-Chinese who showed any particular talent were taken into the Mongol service The case of the Polos themselves is an example of this While Kubilai showed some interest in Confucianism, his greatest favours were reserved for Tibetan lamaism, and the lama Phags Ba was the chief personage in the empire, next to the Khan himself Buddhists, Taoists, Nestorians and Catholic Christians all received the imperial patronage, their teachings were encouraged and their churches and monasteries exempted from taxation The influence of Islam was particularly strong While Moslem commercial groups had for centuries been settled in Canton and other seaports, it was during the Mongol epoch that large Moslem communities grew up in Yunnan, Kansu and Shensi, and remained as a permanent element of great political as well as religious significance Islam survived where Christianity died out because of the conversion of the western Mongol Khanates to Mohammedanism, which

gave the Chinese Moslems a recruiting ground and a constant religious stimulus

The Chinese educated classes regarded these developments with bitter hatred Trampled under foot by the conquerors whom they despised as barbarians, and deprived of their means of livelihood, they saw these foreign faiths preferred to the age-old Sinic doctrines, and this bred in them a spirit of hostility to all things foreign which was to bear fruit in later centuries The foreign officials of Kubilai, having no root or interest in China, and depending on the Khan alone for their positions, too often used these solely as a means of enrichment Marco Polo bears witness to the universal hatred of Mongol rule felt by the Chinese in his description of the murder of Ahmed, the unpopular and extortionate Moslem finance minister The successor of Kubilai, Timur Oljauti, was a reforming emperor, and an idea of the appalling corruption of the Mongol administration is revealed by the fact that he removed some eighteen thousand venal officials

The Yuan period is of importance in the history of European contacts with China, since the Mongol conquests reopened the land routes from the Black Sea and Levantine ports to the Far East The Papacy, anxious to secure a Mongol alliance against the Moslems, sent emissaries to the Mongol rulers, but the missions of the Franciscan friars John of Plano Carpini in 1245–7 and William of Rubruck in 1253–5 produced little results The first to arrive in Peking was another Franciscan, John of Monte Corvino, in 1293 He gained the favour of Kubilai, was allowed to build a church and made thousands of converts, especially among the Alan bodyguard In 1308 the Pope created him archbishop of Cambaluc, and more missionaries were sent to aid him Various other Catholic emissaries, including Odoric of Pordenone and John of Marignolli reached China during the Mongol era, and Catholic communities grew

up in Peking and in Hangchow The fall of the Yuan dynasty and the hostility of the Confucianist Ming rulers combined with renewed isolation from Europe to prevent these from taking permanent root

European traders, particularly from the expanding mercantile cities of Venice and Genoa, also came overland to China Of these the most renowned are the Polos The brothers Niccolo and Matteo Polo made their first journey to the capital of Kubilai and back between 1255 and 1269, returning with letters from the Khan to the Pope asking for a hundred missionaries Only two were sent,[1] but the Polos went back to China in 1271 and Marco, the young son of Niccolo, accompanied them They arrived in Cambaluc in 1275, and for seventeen years were employed by Kubilai, Marco especially being sent on various missions which enabled him to see much of the interior provinces of China The Polos were at last sent back by sea to Persia as escorts of a Mongol princess destined to be the bride of the Ilkhan, or Mongol ruler of that country They finally reached Venice, where they had been long given up for dead, in 1295 Marco Polo was soon afterwards taken prisoner in a naval battle with the Genoese, and while imprisoned in Genoa dictated the famous narrative of his experiences in China The *Travels of Marco Polo*, with its glowing account of the splendour and riches of the Great Khan, of the populous and wealthy cities of the Orient and of the valuable trade in spices and other tropical commodities, aroused the interest and the cupidity of Europe, and was an important factor in the voyages of the Portuguese and of Columbus

The Sung and Yuan periods saw a great expansion of Chinese maritime trade During the northern Sung era the ports of Kuang-chou (Canton), Ming-chou and Hang-chou were the main centres of commerce, and a government office was established at each for the

[1] These turned back and never reached China

superintendence of all matters connected with foreign trade and foreign residents and for the collection of customs duties From the time of the Southern Sung Ch'uanchow rose in importance until it outranked Canton [1] This is the Zaitun[2] of Marco Polo, described by him as second in importance only to Hangchow, the Sung capital Numerous foreign merchants dwelt in these ports, supervised by their headman, chosen from among them by the Chinese They were treated with a liberality which is in marked contrast to the Ming and Ch'ing attitude to foreign traders and seamen Not only did they enjoy a large measure of extraterritorial rights, the Chinese claiming jurisdiction over them only in very serious offences and sometimes not even then, but they intermarried with the Chinese, studied Chinese language and literature, and occasionally were even candidates in the civil service examinations The Sung and Yuan emperors drew a large revenue from maritime commerce, and did all they could to encourage it Under the Sung some branches of trade were government monopolies, and missions were sent to foreign countries to encourage them to send merchants to China

During the T'ang period the carrying trade had been in the hands of the Arabs, but from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries a great development took place in the size and seaworthiness of Chinese ships, which began to be used even by the Moslem traders themselves, especially in voyages between the Chinese ports and the countries of the Malay archipelago Unwieldy as she may appear, there is no better seaboat than the Chinese junk and few sailing vessels are capable of greater speed when going before the wind The extent of the Chinese

[1] Kuwabara, J, "On P'u Shou-keng," *Toyo Bunko Memoirs*, No 2, 1928, pp 1–79

[2] Ch'uanchow is near Amoy, in Fukien. Its harbour is now entirely silted up Zaitun is a corruption of Tz'ŭ-tung—a tree of which many were planted around Ch'uanchow.

shipping resources is shown by the fact that in 1281 Kubilai was able to send an army of a hundred thousand men with supplies and equipment by sea to Japan, a feat of unsurpassed magnitude at that time The complete disaster which overtook this expedition, followed by the growth of Japanese pirate raids on the Chinese coasts, possibly marks the beginning of the decline in the maritime strength of the empire

The Chinese traded with Japan, Indo-China, the East Indies, Ceylon, India, Persia, and Zanzibar, either directly or through Moslem intermediaries They exported chiefly silk stuffs and porcelain ware, and imported pepper, pearls, ivory, camphor, various scented woods, medicines and all kinds of rarities and luxuries The government levied a 10 per cent duty, and shipping freights amounted to another 30 or 40 per cent of the value of the goods, but the merchants, nevertheless, made rich profits The balance of trade was heavily against China, and she paid out large quantities of gold, silver and especially copper cash Sung copper cash has been unearthed as far afield as Zanzibar The Sung tried to prevent this drain of specie by sumptuary laws and by forbidding the export of cash, but these regulations remained a dead letter and a scarcity of coins resulted To remedy this the Sung issued paper money, a method continued and greatly expanded by the Mongols, so that the evils of inflation were severely felt in China towards the end of the Yuan epoch

The interchange of ideas through these commercial contacts with the outside world was perhaps ultimately more important for Europe than for China Through the Arab seamen and merchants Chinese geographic knowledge was greatly extended The writings of Chou K'u-fei in 1178 and of Chau Ju-kua, Inspector of Trade at Ch'uanchow about the middle of the thirteenth century, reveal a knowledge of the principal countries of the East Indies, India and Persia and also something

of Africa and the Mediterranean [1] The trade route to the Persian Gulf was connected with the overland routes to the Levant and thence to Italy and Western Europe From the period of the Five dynasties the use of block printing spread rapidly in China, and it is almost certain that knowledge of it reached Europe via the Near East Some kind of explosive and possibly also artillery were in use during the Chin period in China,[2] while an early twelfth-century Chinese work contains references to the magnetic needle, which was employed on Chinese ships as an aid to navigation The exact way in which these inventions originated and were carried to the West is uncertain, nor should the possibility of independent discovery be ignored What is certain is that the great development and practical application of gunpowder and the mariner's compass took place in Europe, China falling behind owing to the lack of interest in scientific inventions on the part of her educated classes

While the glories of the Mongol empire were recounted by Marco Polo and by other foreign observers, it was actually already in decline during the reign of Kubilai His unceasing wars in Central Asia, Indo-China and Burma, and the disastrous attempts to conquer Japan in 1274 and 1281, drained the man-power of the Mongols and exhausted the material resources of their dominions The establishment of the capital at Peking compelled Kubilai to reconstruct the Grand Canal system, which had fallen into decay under the Sung The demands of the court and army impoverished the provinces, while the corruption and financial maladministration drove the peasantry to ruin, despite the efforts of Kubilai to ameliorate the agrarian distress His successor endeavoured to improve matters, but reigned for only

[1] *Chau Ju-kua, Chu-fan-chi,* Records of Foreign Nations, translated by Hirth and Rockhill

[2] Schlegel, G., *On the Invention and Use of Firearms and Gunpowder in China,* T'oung Pao, 1902, pp 1–11

a few years, and the rest of the Mongol emperors were either short-lived or incompetent Revolts broke out in the southern provinces, and by 1360 all China south of the Yangtze was in anarchy This was ended by Chu Yuan-chang, the son of a peasant, and formerly a Buddhist bonze In 1368 his armies moved north and took Peking, the last Mongol emperor escaping to the Gobi Chu Yuan-chang became the Emperor Hung Wu of the Ming dynasty, and Mongol rule in China was at an end

The Mongol conquest, the culmination of the period of nomadic supremacy, was not without enduring effects The large admixture of fresh blood in the north resulted in a more vigorous racial stock A new literature grew up which found expression in the form of the novel and the drama, very different in both style and content from the orthodox scholarly literature The invasions stimulated the Chinese settlement of the extreme south, especially of the Kuangtung region and of Fukien Hu Shih points out that one result of this was the growth of a general similarity in the dialects of the provinces south of the Yangtze, with the exception of the coastal fringes This was of great importance in preserving the essential unity of Chinese society against political subjugation In this sense, therefore, the Mongol conquest was a unifying rather than a disintegrating factor

CHAPTER VI

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

THE Ming period, which lasted from 1368 to 1644, while often given brief mention by historians, is nevertheless of crucial importance, for it was then that the Chinese governing class, trained in a narrowly orthodox school, became impervious to new ideas, convinced of the barbarism of all foreign peoples, and therefore hostile to outside influences In the Ming era this feeling of intellectual self-sufficiency was due to a very natural reaction on the part of the Confucianist scholars against the indignities they had suffered from the Yuan emperors Through the standardized educational system which was perfected under the Ming, the literati more than regained their former predominance, and were therefore in a position to shape the cultural life of the empire to their liking, especially since their old rivals, Buddhism and Taoism, lost much of their former capacity for development

This was not an immediate result of the Ming triumph over the Mongols Hung Wu, the ex-Buddhist priest and soldier of fortune, had no great personal liking for the Confucianist scholar class He consciously modelled his administrative reorganization on the T'ang system, redivided the empire into fifteen provinces, gave appanages to the members of his family and others of his supporters, and issued a law code, similar in arrangement and in spirit to those of the T'ang and Sung eras Under Hung Wu the office of chief minister was abolished and replaced by a cabinet over which the emperor presided, thus augmenting his personal control of the central

administration In local government Hung Wu for a time reverted to the Han policy of allowing the provincial governors to nominate candidates for official positions Like Liu Pang, the founder of the Han dynasty, Hung Wu had scant sympathy for the Confucian theory of benevolent government As emperor he continued the methods which had won him the throne, and all who in any way opposed his will were remorselessly struck down

Nevertheless, Hung Wu came to realize that to establish his dynasty on a firm basis he had to conciliate and utilize the Confucianist scholars As the representative of a Sinic triumph over alien domination he could not well continue the Mongol practice of staffing the civil service with foreigners, while a purely military government had obvious dangers and deficiencies Also the strength of the Confucianist gentry in the provinces made them too influential a factor to be ignored Although in theory the civil service was open to all classes alike, in practice the years of study necessary to attempt the examinations with any hope of success automatically excluded the mass of the people, save for an occasional promising lad who might become the protégé of a man of means Successful candidates did not ipso facto obtain positions, for not only might there be no immediate vacancy, but all sorts of wires had to be pulled, especially in times of weak government when favouritism and the sale of positions were common Therefore, office was actually very much the prerogative of the wealthy, and in many cases was a hereditary profession continuing for generations in powerful families An emperor who alienated them could be assured that they would outlast him and ultimately bring about the downfall of his house So Hung Wu had to modify his initial policy and admit the Confucianists to that share in the administration which they regarded as their right

From the inception of his reign Hung Wu had promoted the state cult of Confucius In 1370 he decreed

that the Sage alone should receive such worship, a step probably intended to placate the rationalist school of Chu Hsi, who objected to the divine honours paid to a multitude of former scholars and military leaders Later in the Ming era it was decided that Confucius should be revered as the greatest of teachers, but not regarded as though he had been an emperor, or a god [1] Hung Wu made the Hanlin Academy, which had originated under the T'ang, the chief advisory body on literary and scholastic matters He reorganized the educational system, restored and added to the schools and colleges, and finally re-instituted the civil service examinations His successors continued this policy, and in 1416 an edict made a compendium of Sung Confucianist writings, arranged under imperial direction, henceforth the sole and obligatory curriculum in the schools Thus Confucianism as restated and systematized by Chu Hsi became the only accepted and orthodox teaching

The Chinese civil service was in many ways a praiseworthy institution, and antedated by centuries anything of its kind in European countries The examinations were, in the main, honestly conducted and administered Their standards were high and the tests severe, it being not uncommon for candidates to succumb to the ordeal of days of imprisonment in the examination cells There were three grades of examinations the district or preparatory ones, success in which entitled a man to a degree, various social privileges, and sometimes financial assistance from the government to continue studying, the higher tests, held in the provincial capitals, and the final ones, conducted in Peking Normally, though not invariably, a candidate for office had to pass the last examination at the capital before he could expect to be nominated to a post The subject-matter of the test was wide, and no student could hope to succeed who

[1] Shryock, J K, *The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius*, pp 185–191

had not a thorough grasp of Chinese classical literature Numerous encyclopedias were compiled during the Yuan, Ming and Ch'ing periods, containing essays on subjects likely to be set in the examinations, and intended for the use of civil service candidates An inspection of the material in these reveals the fact that the applicant for office was given a thorough grounding in government, law, taxation, economic matters and military organization The training was therefore much more practical than is often supposed, and while there was a tendency to favour aptness of classical quotation, brilliance of style and excellence of calligraphy to the detriment of sound and original thinking, some commentary and criticisms were expected The insistence of Wang An-shih that historical and classical erudition should be applied to the solution of contemporary problems of government and administration appears not to have been wholly forgotten The defect lay in the orthodoxy of the curriculum, which tended to grow narrower and more rigid under the later Ming and the Ch'ing Thus new ideas were effectively excluded, and men of an independent turn of mind were usually in opposition to the government and the bureaucracy Nor was there any chance of breaking with the authoritarian traditions of the classical age, since nothing was acceptable which could not somehow be shown to be derived from the teachings of Confucius The literate ruling group included not merely the actual officials, but also the numerous unsuccessful or partially successful examinees, who enjoyed a definite social status All were imbued with the same general ideas which made possible political and cultural unity The "barbarian" rule had been thrown off, the old and tried administrative system restored, and with the passing of centuries the conviction grew that the Chinese alone were a civilized community, and that outside peoples were of necessity inferior in intellect and in cultural attainment

This feeling was enhanced by the political conception of China as the one suzerain state, centrally situated amid a ring of small tributaries It was an idea as old as the empire itself, and it rested upon the fact that China in size and population was the one great country of extreme Asia and also that Chinese cultural influence had played a decisive part in the social and intellectual growth of most of the peoples in the vicinity The very name which the Chinese gave to their country—Chung Kuo, the Central State—implies this idea of superiority But it received a new emphasis from the Mongol emperors, because they definitely conceived themselves as lords of the world, and in the days of their arrogant greatness summoned all peoples to submit to them or be trodden down The Ming emperors inherited this tradition, and strove to make it a reality Thus the Chinese viewed themselves as both politically and culturally on a higher plane than all other peoples, and this proud attitude, very largely substantiated by the actual state of affairs in eastern Asia, tended to make Sinic civilization more rigid and less responsive to outside stimuli than it had been in the cosmopolitan days of the T'ang

The two great emperors of the early Ming era, Hung Wu, 1368–1398, and Yung Lo, 1403–1424, both pursued a vigorous expansive policy Hung Wu drove the Mongols into the heart of their home territory, took Karakorum, and for the moment reduced the nomads to vassalage But they remained a serious danger, and Yung Lo followed the time-honoured policy of setting tribe against tribe, with the especial objects of destroying the authority of the lineal descendants of Chingiz Khan and of firmly establishing the Chinese overlordship He was temporarily successful in the first aim, but in the process he helped to strengthen the power of another tribal group, the Oirat, whose chief secured the hegemony over the Mongols and became in his turn a grave menace In 1449 the Emperor Chêng T'ung was defeated and

captured by the Oirat, but was released the next year, and by the peace which ensued in 1453 the Chinese agreed not to interfere in Mongol politics At the end of the fifteenth century the Oirat were overthrown by Dayan, a descendant of Chingiz Khan, and once more the Mongols attacked the frontier provinces of the empire They remained a constant threat throughout the sixteenth century and played an important part in the final downfall of the Ming

A similar forward policy was carried out in Manchuria by the first Ming rulers Hung Wu subdued a Mongol general who had set up an independent state in Liaotung and incorporated this territory into the empire He also brought Jehol firmly under Chinese control, so as to guard the approach to Hopei and the Shanhaikwan defile from the northwest, but Yung Lo made the mistake of reversing this action, and thus gave the Mongols a renewed chance to conduct raids through this area [1] Yung Lo pushed forward in the northeast, and in 1403 established a military post on the Amur The tribes of this region, some direct descendants of the Juchên, others less closely related to them, were kept apart from those in western Manchuria, and the general Chinese policy towards them was one of divide et impera The tribal chiefs were kept loyal to the empire by the bestowal of honours and by being put in command of the military districts into which the region was organized, the whole being subject to the High Commandery of Liaotung Chinese control in Manchuria was facilitated by the unification of Korea in 1392 under a new dynasty, which became a faithful tributary of the empire and co-operated in dealing with hostile tribes in Manchuria

Hung Wu established the imperial capital at Nanking, and girdled the city with an immense wall, over twenty miles in length, which still remains as one of the greatest

[1] Lin, T C, "Manchuria in the Ming Empire," *Nankai Social and Economic Quarterly*, Vol VIII, No 1, pp 1–43

accomplishments of Ming architecture There was much to be said, especially from the economic standpoint, for this choice of capital, since Nanking was situated in the heart of the key economic area, but it had the great disadvantage of being far removed from the zones of greatest danger to the empire, Mongolia and Manchuria Therefore Yung Lo decided to move the capital to the north, while retaining Nanking as a secondary centre of administration So arose Peking, the northern capital, as distinct from the southern one, Nanking Yung Lo laid out a magnificent new city, partly on the site of the former capital of Kubilai The Peking of to-day is essentially what Yung Lo made it, and his design appears to have owed something to the old T'ang capital at Ch'ang An. The object of Yung Lo in reverting to a northern capital was to ensure the more effective defence of the empire against a renewed Mongol onslaught, and as part of his general plan of defence he also undertook the repair and reconstruction of large stretches of the Great Wall In Manchuria the settled Chinese area in Liaotung was protected by a wall, extending from Shanhaikwan to the Yalu, which was not wholly completed until 1468

The establishment of the capital in the north raised the old problem of its adequate food supply Yung Lo at first thought of sea transportation, but the raids of Japanese pirates on the Chinese coasts made this plan impractical, and he was forced to repair and improve the Yuan Grand Canal In view of the distance of Peking from the main agricultural resources of the empire and the danger it ran of being cut off from the Yangtze region by a rebellion, the Ming emperors, and after them the Ch'ing, tried by numerous irrigation and water control projects to increase the products of the rural areas in the vicinity of the capital, but their efforts were only indifferently rewarded, and the grain tribute continued to come mainly from the south.

The reign of Yung Lo is remarkable for the assertion of Chinese authority in Indo-China, the East Indies, the Indian Ocean and even as far as the Persian Gulf and the east coast of Africa Annam was conquered and annexed, although it soon revolted and recovered its autonomy Between 1405 and 1413 seven naval expeditions under the command of the eunuch, Chêng Ho, asserted Chinese suzerainty over Siam, Malacca, Java, Sumatra and Ceylon, defeated recalcitrant chiefs and ensured the despatch of regular tribute missions to Peking Yung Lo in general followed Sung and Yuan precedents in his liberal attitude to overseas commerce, but later emperors altered this policy Chinese subjects were forbidden to go abroad except by imperial licence, maritime trade was mainly confined to Canton, and strict regulations were enacted for its control Owing to the indifference of the Ming government to commercial profit the local authorities, as distinct from officials specially sent from Peking to supervise tribute missions, secured the right to collect duties Thus the subordination of maritime trade to considerations of prestige, its restriction to a few ports and theoretically strict regulation, combined with a great deal of evasion by the traders with the connivance of the local officials, were all well-established features long before the arrival of European ships in Chinese waters

The restriction of overseas intercourse was due in part to the Japanese pirates, who became an ever-growing menace The government of Japan, actually in the hands of the Ashikaga shoguns, was friendly to the Ming, and, according to Chinese annals even entered into tributary relations But it was quite unable to control the sea-rovers, who repeatedly pillaged all the Chinese coastal provinces from Shantung to the island of Hainan The cities of Ningpo and Hangchow were sacked and Nanking itself menaced in 1555 and 1563 A coastguard service was organized and occasional defeats inflicted

upon the raiders, but the Ming had constantly to fear their alliance with Chinese freebooters and discontented elements

When the Portuguese rounded the Cape of Good Hope and began to build up a colonial empire in the Indian Ocean a new danger threatened the Ming In 1511 Albuquerque took Malacca, the key to the trade of the East Indies and a state tributary to China The first Portuguese trading venture to Canton was in 1514, and three years later an embassy under Pires arrived to seek regular commercial privileges But the piratical acts of other Portuguese captains led to the failure of the embassy and the imprisonment of its members in Canton, while all foreign trade was prohibited by imperial decree Hostilities resulted, and in 1522 the Chinese defeated a Portuguese fleet near Canton [1] After this the Portuguese decided to alter their policy and to win by subservience what they could not gain by force The discontent aroused among the local officials and gentry at the closing of Canton to foreign trade resulted in its reopening in 1530, but the Portuguese were still excluded They carried on a clandestine trade at Ch'uanchow and Ningpo until in 1554 they were formally readmitted to a share in commerce The Portuguese were also allowed to remain in Macao, where they had established a trading settlement Their services in driving off pirates probably predisposed the local authorities in their favour, although their actions continued to be carefully watched They were subject to Chinese jurisdiction, and were more than once brought to submission by the stopping of provisions from Canton, without which the colony could not exist Nevertheless, Macao grew swiftly and became the entrepôt of trade in the Far East, the Portuguese acting as middlemen in the valuable commerce between China, the East Indies and Japan They were very jealous of their monopoly, and when, after the foundation of

[1] Chang, T., *Sino-Portuguese Trade*, pp 32, *et seq*

Manila by Legazpi in 1571, the Spaniards appeared on the scene, the Portuguese did all they could to set the Chinese against these new-comers and to foil their efforts to secure commercial privileges The union of the crowns of Spain and Portugal in 1580 made no difference in the Portuguese attitude to the Spaniards in Chinese waters, and this hostility between the two Catholic peoples materially aided the Dutch in their destruction of the Portuguese maritime power in the seventeenth century

The propagation of the Catholic faith was a prime object with the Spaniards and Portuguese, but in China this was made difficult since foreigners could not enter the country without imperial sanction In 1511 the Confucianists obtained the issue of a law against heresies, which was primarily intended to check the growth of existing politico-religious secret societies, but which also operated against Christianity The Spaniards entertained plans of conquering China, and in 1586 a definite proposal for an invasion was sent to Madrid by the governor of the Philippines, but the defeat of the Armada despatched against England in 1588 and the subsequent decline of Spanish sea power put an end to such schemes

Attempts by Franciscan missionaries to get into China proved fruitless, but the suaver and shrewder Jesuits at length found a way In 1582 Matteo Ricci came to Macao and began the wise policy of appealing to the Chinese love of scholarship and of winning their respect through his skill in mathematics and astronomy These tactics proved successful, and in 1601 Ricci was permitted to reside and to preach in Peking In 1611 he and his colleagues were able to supersede the Moslem astronomers in what, to the Chinese, was the vitally important function of reforming the calendar The Jesuits also won the imperial favour by their medical knowledge and by casting improved artillery for the Ming armies

By the end of the sixteenth century the Ming empire was steadily declining None of the successors of Yung Lo were men of outstanding ability, and most of them were weaklings who exercised only feeble control over the administrative machinery and were frequently the tools of palace favourites and intriguers One consequence of this was the increasing power of eunuch ministers The employment of eunuchs as officials was not necessarily an evil Under a strong emperor, such as Yung Lo, they served as a check on the numerous imperial relatives and the Confucian bureaucracy Since their tenure of office depended entirely upon the imperial favour, they were useful minions of a ruler anxious to increase his authority and to prevent the dominance of powerful official or landed families The danger was that in the case of an infant or of a weak emperor the eunuchs were liable to gain undue influence, by leading the ruler into vicious courses and gaining his confidence at the expense of all other advisers Then they became the masters rather than the servants at court Although there were many eunuchs of ability in state affairs, the majority were intent only upon accumulating vast private fortunes, and used their influence upon the emperor, exercised either directly or through some concubine whom they had introduced to the court, to secure the real control of administrative posts Thus appointments could be obtained only through buying the favour of the eunuchs, while upright and able magistrates, who attacked this state of affairs, were deprived of office and sometimes put to death on trumped-up charges The civil service officials, fleeced by the greedy eunuchs, recouped themselves at the expense of the people they governed, which resulted, as under the later Han rulers, in discontent and rebellion The evil reached its height under the emperors Wan Li, 1573–1620, and Hsi Tsung, 1621–8, when for many years the chief eunuch, Wei Chung-hsien, was the real master of the empire and wrought irremediable harm.

The appearance of powerful external enemies hastened the ruin of the Ming In the late sixteenth century Japan was united under Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who planned to employ the energies of the Japanese feudal nobility and safeguard the rule of his house by launching an attack on China through Korea From 1592 to 1598 a desperate war was waged in the peninsula, the Ming being compelled to put forth their full strength to save their vassal state Even so the Chinese armies were repeatedly defeated, and it was the Korean naval victories and the death of Hideyoshi which frustrated Japanese ambitions and terminated the struggle Its consequences were the serious weakening of Ming resources, the intensification of the internal maladministration and burdens on the people, and the utter prostration of Korea, which was unable to perform her useful function of co-operating with China to repress any dangerous movement on the part of the various tribes in Manchuria Had this conflict with Japan not occurred, it is probable that the growth of Manchu power would have been checked at the outset

The Manchus were a small group, related to the Juchên, or Chin, but not their direct descendants In the early Ming period the Manchus dwelt near the Korean border, east of the Long White Mountains Pressed by wilder tribes from the north, some of them moved west to near the Ming centres of strength Their chiefs were given rank and office by the Ming, and were utilized in the general imperial policy of keeping the Juchên peoples at peace and subordinate to China Contacts with Chinese officials and merchants resulted in the Manchus being affected by Sinic cultural influences, although they took their alphabet from the Mongols As formerly with the K'itan, Chin and Mongols, a leader arose among the Manchus, who by his forceful character and military genius welded the scattered Juchên tribes together This was Nurhachi, who was born in or about

1559 In 1583 his father and grandfather were treacherously slain by a Chinese governor who had intervened in a tribal quarrel The Ming court sought to placate Nurhachi by gifts and the bestowal of a title He bided his time and steadily built up his power in a long series of campaigns, until in 1616 he was strong enough to take the royal style, calling his dynasty the Later Chin, thus indicating that he felt himself the successor of the twelfth-century Chin emperors The Ming, thoroughly alarmed at the growth of this dangerous power, sought to check Nurhachi by aiding his most stubborn enemies, the Yeho tribe Consequently in 1618 he declared formal war upon the Chinese empire, and his well-trained army, organized in four main divisions, or Banners,[1] poured into Liaotung The following year the Ming sent a powerful force against him, but Nurhachi defeated in detail the four columns into which this was divided, and in the next few years the Ming forces, hampered by dissensions among their commanders and eunuch intrigues at the capital, lost practically all Manchuria But the Manchu advance on Peking was checked at the strong fortress of Ning Yuan, equipped with heavy artillery cast by the Jesuits, and Nurhachi, chagrined at this check, died in 1626, in his new capital at what is now the city of Mukden

Under his successor the Manchus adopted the strategy of turning the Chinese defence line by an advance into Jehol and Chahar The Mongols of this region were subdued, and most of the other Mongol tribes south of the Gobi then allied with the Manchu ruler, and in 1635 gave him the state seal of the former Yuan emperors Thus the movement against the Ming became a combined Manchu-Mongol one, the Great Wall was broken through, and the northern provinces of China harried by repeated raids To signify his intention of displacing the Ming, the Manchu emperor now took the dynastic title of Ch'ing

[1] These were later increased to eight

or Pure In 1637 he overran Korea and forced the Koreans to abandon the Ming and to accept his suzerainty But Ning Yuan and other strong points guarding the Shanhaikuan defile still held out, and the Manchus might not have succeeded in overthrowing the Ming had not internal events in China delivered Peking into their hands

To meet the heavy cost of the Manchu war the Ming government greatly increased the land tax and imposed numerous other levies [1] Most of the proceeds were misappropriated by the eunuchs, and rebellion broke out, especially in Honan and Hupei The leader in this region was a Shensi brigand, Li Tzŭ-chêng, whose chief lieutenant was another Shensi man, Chang Hsien-chung, of marked sadistic and homicidal tendencies In 1643 Li Tzŭ-chêng advanced into Shensi and took Sian (Ch'ang An), where at the beginning of the next year he proclaimed himself emperor From Sian the rebels fought their way through Shansi and thence to Peking, which was betrayed to them by some of the eunuch ministers The Ming emperor committed suicide, and Li Tzŭ-chêng was momentarily master of the empire But Wu San-kuei, the general in command of the Ming army at Ning Yuan, after some hesitation and negotiations with both sides, threw in his lot with the Manchu leader Dorgun, regent for the infant Manchu emperor Their combined forces defeated Li Tzŭ-chêng and the Manchus entered Peking

The Manchu victory was thus mainly due to the support they received from the Mongols, the Chinese population of Liaotung, which alone outnumbered the Manchus, and from discontented elements in China The Banner organization was extended to the Chinese and the Mongols, and the efforts of the Ch'ing emperors

[1] Wang Yu-Ch'uan, "The Rise of Land Tax and the Fall of Dynasties in Chinese History," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol ix, No 2, June, 1936

to prevent intermarriage between Bannermen and outside Chinese families had a social rather than a racial object The conquest of southern and western China from the Ming party, who made a stout resistance, was the work of Wu San-kuei and other Chinese generals who had joined the Manchus Li Tzŭ-chêng sought refuge in a Buddhist monastery, and Chang Hsien-chung, after holding out for some years in Szech'uan and almost decimating the population of that province, was finally defeated and killed As a reward for their services Wu San-kuei and other Chinese leaders received fiefs which embraced most of China south of the Yangtze At sea the pirate leader Chêng Chêng-kung, or Koxinga, long harassed the coastal provinces, ostensibly in the Ming cause From his base at Amoy he threatened Nanking, and in 1661 drove the Dutch from Formosa, where he and his son ruled over an independent kingdom, based on maritime power

The task of establishing the Manchu dynasty on a firm basis at the expense not only of the Ming supporters, but of those elements who had aided the invaders, was achieved by the Emperor K'ang Hsi, 1661–1722 He first endeavoured to put an end to the semi-independent rule of the Chinese generals in the south This action provoked a revolt in 1674, headed by the aged, but still formidable, Wu San-kuei At first successful, the rebels were weakened by their own dissensions and by the death of Wu in 1678 Three years later the last embers of the revolt were stamped out With some aid from the Dutch, K'ang Hsi was also able to bring Amoy and Formosa under his rule and end the pirate empire in those regions

By craft rather than force K'ang Hsi weakened the power of the Mongols, moving the tribes away from strategical points near the Great Wall and keeping them out of Manchuria by means of the Willow Palisade, a line of defence running from near Shanhaikwan to the

Sungari river In Turkestan the growth of the Eleuths under their chief, Galdan, constituted a new menace, especially since he was constrained to interfere in Tibetan politics in order to secure the support of the lamas, now all-powerful in Mongolia, as well as in Tibet K'ang Hsi sent aid to the Khalkas, enemies of Galdan, who was defeated, and his schemes for uniting all the Turkish peoples was shattered In 1720 K'ang Hsi also intervened in Tibet, where a dispute was in process over the succession to the office of Dalai Lama A Chinese army entered Lhasa and ensured the success of the pro-Manchu party, thus bringing Tibet into political allegiance to China

The Eleuths were far from crushed by the defeat and death of Galdan, and continued to be a serious menace In dealing with them, K'ang Hsi had to take into account a new power which was making itself felt in Asia, that of Russia Since the reign of Tsar Ivan IV (the Terrible) the Russian advance across Siberia had continued until it reached the north Pacific shore early in the seventeenth century Russian emissaries had come to Peking during the Ming period, and the adventurous Cossacks, who were the spearhead of the Muscovite advance, began to establish outposts in the valley of the Amur K'ang Hsi could not tolerate this threat to the Manchu home territories, and sent an army to destroy Albazin, the chief Russian fort, but neither Russia nor China wanted war The Russian aims were primarily commercial, and were especially directed to finding a market in China for their furs and obtaining tea and other products The Manchu policy towards Russia was political in object and sought to prevent her from allying with the Eleuths Diplomatic relations were difficult to establish, not merely because of the hardships of travel between Moscow and Peking, but also because the Russians knew no Chinese and the Chinese no Russian Consequently, the Jesuits at Peking came to play an important part as intermediaries, and early

communications and treaties were written in Latin The Jesuits were more than mere interpreters and translators, since they wished for peace between the two empires, so as to ensure to themselves an easier means of communication with Europe through Siberia than the existing long and arduous sea-route Therefore they acted as mediators, generally supporting the Chinese standpoint, but not so far as to provoke the Russians to a rupture of negotiations [1] The first Sino-Russian treaty was concluded at Nerchinsk in 1689 It arranged for limited trading facilities, and provided that Russians who committed crimes while in China were to be repatriated for punishment by their own authorities, Chinese within Russian territory being treated in the same way It also made a beginning of the definition of boundaries between China and Russia Various Russian semi-diplomatic, semi-commercial missions followed, as well as a Chinese embassy to Russian Central Asia In 1727 the Treaty of Kiakhta provided for a more extensive boundary delimitation, and secured for Russia the right to send priests to Peking to minister to Russian prisoners taken at Albazin, and also students to learn the Chinese language This meant that the services of the Jesuits as intermediaries, which both Powers had some reason to suspect, could be dispensed with Russia was successful in initiating a valuable trade, China in keeping the Eleuths from getting overt Russian support and in preventing a Russian occupation of the Amur Valley On this basis the two empires maintained a somewhat uneasy friendship during the eighteenth century

K'ang Hsi was a minor when he came to the throne, and the regents who governed for him subjected the Jesuits to a severe persecution and deprived them of their position as keepers of the calendar When K'ang Hsi,

[1] Cahen, G., *Some Early Russo-Chinese Relations*, pp 4, *et seq* Translated by W S Ridge

who had been tutored by the Jesuit mathematician and astronomer Schall, assumed the government, the Jesuits were restored to favour In 1669 Verbiest, another famous member of the Society of Jesus, conclusively demonstrated his superiority over the Moslems in astronomical science, and in consequence the Jesuits remained in control of the Board of Astronomy until 1838 In medicine and mathematical knowledge they had also much to teach the Chinese, while their services in connection with the Treaty of Nerchinsk still further improved their position in the eyes of the emperor As a reward an edict of toleration was issued in 1692, putting the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries on the same footing as the Buddhist lamas, and giving them permission to preach and to erect churches Their prospects seemed excellent, but were spoiled by a long and bitter controversy which mainly centred around the attitude the Catholics should take to the state honours paid to Confucius and to ancestral rites in general The Jesuits mostly took the view that these were civil rather than religious ceremonies and not incompatible with Christianity Rival Catholic orders challenged this position and carried the dispute to Rome, where the Pope eventually decided against the Jesuits They tried to get the ruling altered, but the Papacy sent out legates to enforce obedience and to explain to K'ang Hsi the attitude of Rome As the emperor had already pronounced in favour of the Jesuit standpoint he was indignant, and gave the missionaries the choice between obedience to him and expulsion Spasmodic persecutions followed, which grew harsher under the successors of K'ang Hsi, but a greater blow to the Catholic cause in China was the dissolution of the Jesuit order in 1773, soon followed by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars in Europe

In 1736, after the short and troubled reign of Yung Chêng, his son, the famous Emperor Ch'ien Lung, came

to the throne He restored Chinese power in central Asia to what it had been in the glorious days of the Han and the T'ang The growing use of artillery and other firearms gave the Chinese a decisive advantage in their age-long struggle with the nomads The Eleuths were finally crushed and their territories settled by Chinese colonists This success was followed by the conquest of the Tarim basin, and the newly-won territory was called Sinkiang, or the New Dominion, a name it still retains A revolt against Chinese influence in Tibet led to another military occupation of Lhasa and to the appointment of two Chinese resident officials there to watch the Dalai Lama In 1792 the warlike Gurkhas of Nepal invaded Tibet, but were defeated by a Manchu general The British authorities in India sent to the Chinese officials in Tibet offering military assistance, as the Gurkhas were also inimical to the British, but before anything could come of this the Manchu army, despite the forbidding mountain barriers, entered Nepal and forced the Gurkhas to recognize Chinese suzerainty In Szech'uan, Yunnan and other southwestern provinces Ch'ien Lung endeavoured to bring the aboriginal tribes more firmly under Chinese control, but they made a stubborn resistance in their mountain fastnesses and he was not wholly successful The Burmese, after an indecisive war, also agreed to pay tribute to the Manchu court, while Chinese overlordship was re-asserted in Annam Of all the countries of the extreme Orient Japan alone remained outside the circle of Chinese tributaries, although continuing to be deeply influenced by Sinic culture Thus under the Ch'ing China seemed more than ever to be the centre of the world and superior to all other countries

K'ang Hsi had done much to win the Confucianist scholars to the Manchu cause by giving them employment in compiling two great dictionaries, an anthology of T'ang poetry and a compendium of literature, as well as by conferring special titles of literary merit upon them

Yet there were still some who remained unreconciled, and Ch'ien Lung feared their influence and that of pro-Ming literature upon the people He therefore superintended the forming of a compendium of all Chinese books whose soundness of style and orthodoxy of opinion entitled them to such preservation, while weeding out works deficient in style or hostile in tone to the Ch'ing An edict issued in 1774 entrusted this gigantic task to the Hanlin Academy and it was not finally completed until 1788 Over two thousand volumes were destroyed, but many more were copied and catalogued, forming the "Four Divisions" of literature The result of this literary inquisition was to preserve much of what otherwise might have perished, but also to destroy many works of value and to impose a deadening uniformity of style and tone upon Chinese writing

Despite the harmful effect of such measures as these, Chinese civilization during the Ming and Ch'ing periods was by no means devoid of creative thought In philosophy the system of Chu Hsi was challenged by the intuitive method advocated by Wang Yang-ming, 1472–1528, whose influence remained important in China and even more so in Japan In the seventeenth century, possibly as a result of the scientific method introduced by the Jesuits, a school of critics arose who attacked the Sung Confucianists from the standpoint of historical scholarship, and showed that many of the works upon which Chu Hsi had relied were either deliberate forgeries or of later date than he had supposed This group was known as that of the Han Learning because they preferred the works of Han commentators to those of the Sung They were not mere academic theorists, but advocated a reform in the examinations and the freeing of the curriculum from the limitations imposed upon it by the edict of 1416 Especially active under K'ang Hsi, they found the more rigid orthodoxy of Ch'ien Lung a barrier to their objectives, but representatives of the group

continued to appear in the nineteenth century, and did something to prepare the way for the changes which followed the victories of the Occidental Powers over China The drama also made marked progress during these centuries, while great advances took place in the style and content of the novel, of which the most outstanding example is the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, written in the first half of the eighteenth century Architecture and ceramics reached new levels of excellence under the Ming and the Manchus, although some decadence is noticeable in the later period of Ch'ien Lung

Yet in general the Chinese, and the Manchus, who soon absorbed the Chinese outlook, remained in a state of self-satisfied conservatism and had no share in the profound changes which were transforming all aspects of Western civilization The glowing Jesuit accounts of China aroused interest and admiration in Europe, with the result that things Chinese became the vogue, especially during the first half of the eighteenth century, while, except in the domain of mathematics and astronomy, China received little stimulus from Europe, and gained practically no comprehension of the true nature of the civilization with which she was to be brought into close contact during the nineteenth century The Spaniards and the Russians had already taken the measure of her military weakness, and after 1815 the European Powers were free to turn their attention to Eastern Asia in their quest for new territories and fresh markets.

CHAPTER VII

THE IMPACT OF THE WEST

THE Chinese administrative system as it existed under Ch'ien Lung was in essentials what it had been since the Han era At the apex stood the Emperor, the Son of Heaven, whose religious functions, including the sacrifices to the deities of Heaven and Earth, testified to the tenacity of the old Sinic cult and to its enduring influence upon the life and thought of the race Invested with the mandate of heaven, the emperor had always to fear that natural calamities, defeat in war, or administrative deficiencies would be taken as a sign that he had forfeited the right to rule, and that a rebellion would be thereby precipitated Yet his power to avert such disasters was strictly limited, not by definite constitutional checks, but by the force of immemorial custom His was the ultimate authority in the appointment, dismissal or punishment of functionaries, in the settlement of the succession, and in the bestowal of rank or honours, but his legislative power, the essence of sovereignty as understood in the West, was largely confined to the expression or interpretation of the unchanging moral principles which to the Confucianists were the basis of legal enactments Imperial edicts which were considered to contravene these principles were nullified by the passive resistance and non-co-operation alike of magistrates and people

The machinery of central government consisted of the Inner Council, or Council of State This originally was a purely military body, but from the time of Yung Chêng took over the functions of the Grand Secretariat, which became a mainly honorary and ornamental group

Below these were the six Boards, or departments of government First in importance were those of Civil Appointments, controlling the hierarchy of administrative officials, and making promotions, rewards, or degradations, of Revenue, charged with the apportionment of taxation and tribute, and the disbursement of the proceeds, and of Rites, which supervised State ceremonies, court etiquette, education, examinations and all religious sects and temples, it was also entrusted with the relations with tributary states The remaining Boards were those of Punishments, which conducted the administration of the criminal code, of War, and of Public Works, entrusted with the construction and repair of government buildings, bridges, vessels, flood relief and irrigation projects Among other departments was that of Astronomy, in which the Jesuits had become so influential, of especial importance because on the accuracy of its calculations depended that harmony of the seasons and celestial bodies with human activities which lay at the root of Confucian philosophy The Board of Dependencies dealt with all affairs relating to Mongolia and Turkestan, and also handled relations with Russia until 1861 Finally, there was the peculiar and long-established institution usually termed the Censorate, which watched and criticized the actions and policy of all departments of the government, both central and local, as well as those of the emperor himself and his relatives This was a powerful organ for the expression of such public opinion as existed, and a check on tyranny, corruption and general maladministration, especially since a Censor was usually immune from punishment for what he said The Censorate was not free from bias and favouritism, and reflected the conservative attitude of the scholar class, although it was not always unanimous in opinion Until the later Ch'ing era the higher officials in these various governmental bodies were chosen from Manchus and Chinese in equal numbers

The largest units of local government were the provinces, eighteen in number during most of the Ch'ing period The highest local officers were the Viceroys and Governors, whose functions in their areas were similar to those of the emperor over the whole country, and whose actual powers were often a good deal greater Other influential local officials were the Provincial Treasurer, the Provincial Judge, the Salt Comptroller and the Grain Intendant A lesser magistrate, who became especially familiar to foreigners in the treaty ports, was the Intendant of Circuit, or Taot'ai He controlled the militia in his area, as well as usually the Customs, and formed a link between the higher provincial officials and the district magistrates These comprised the officers of the *fu* and *hsien*, the latter being the basic local unit in political, judicial and fiscal administration All these various functionaries were a check on each other, and during the Ch'ing period, it was the rule to make no appointment for more than three years or to confer on a man any office in his native district, so as to avoid any dangerous local influence Side by side with the civil administration stood the military organization, composed of the Banner Corps, eight in all, each divided into Manchu, Mongol and Chinese sections, commanded by a general, who ranked higher than the civilian officials, and the "Green Standard" or provincial troops, under the control of the local authorities After the reign of Ch'ien Lung the military efficiency of both Bannermen and provincial forces declined rapidly

The outstanding characteristics of this governmental structure were its cumbrous system of checks and balances, the lack of any central body to co-ordinate provincial activities, and extreme decentralization Distance and difficulty of communications, local separatism and the lack of a national sentiment all made for slowness of action on the part of Peking, and great difficulty in enforcing throughout the empire such decisions as were

made In dealing with foreign Powers, the absence of any definite body charged with the management of such relations proved an additional source of trouble The Western nations for long did not grasp the essentially mediæval character of the Chinese state or realize that a treaty or an imperial edict in favour of foreign intercourse was apt to be the beginning rather than the end of misunderstandings and conflict The inability of the court to make unpalatable agreements with foreign states effective in the provinces, and even to exercise complete control over the conduct of the local authorities, was an insuperable barrier to the reorganization necessary in the face of increasing popular discontent and growing foreign pressure, and was a root cause of the final collapse, not only of the Manchu dynasty, but of the empire itself

The protracted wars in Central Asia, which drained the imperial treasury, the destruction of literature and harsh treatment of scholars suspected of Ming sympathies, as well as the overweening power of the capable but avaricious favourite, Ho Shên, were less pleasing aspects of the long reign of Ch'ien Lung Under his successor, Chia Ch'ing, 1796–1820, the outwardly imposing appearance of the Manchu empire barely concealed the grave weaknesses which fifty years later were to bring it to the verge of collapse, and which exerted their full effects during the reigns of Tao Kuang, 1820–50, and Hsien Fêng, 1850–61

The Manchu emperors inherited from the Ming the system of tributary trade relations which still coloured the imperial attitude to the Portuguese and their later rivals the Dutch and the English The eclipse of Spain and Portugal as maritime nations of the first rank and the decline of Dutch sea power in the eighteenth century left England the foremost of the countries engaging in overseas commerce Therefore until the latter half of the nineteenth century the predominant naval and commercial position of Great Britain made her the deciding

factor in European policy towards China Her first trading venture, under Captain Weddell, ended in virtual failure in 1637, owing to Portuguese jealousy, but the growing interest of the powerful British East India Company resulted in its securing a monopoly of the China trade in 1699 Manchu policy was at first undecided, and in 1685 the ports of China were declared free to foreign traders, but this liberal treatment was soon reversed and trade confined to Canton Here it was carried on under strict and, to the foreigners, irksome regulations It was limited to the factories, or warehouses and temporary residences of the various companies, and foreign traders were not allowed beyond these, and they had to retire to Macao when the trading season was over The Hong merchants, originally middlemen between the foreigners and Chinese traders, were now given a monopoly of commercial transactions with foreigners, and acted as sole intermediaries between them and the officials, with whom the Western merchants could not communicate directly Heavy duties were levied upon commerce for the benefit of the imperial exchequer and of the Kuangtung administration The trade was at first chiefly an export one, in tea and silk, there being no demand for the woollen and cloth goods which at that time were English staple products Consequently the balance of trade was heavily in favour of China, and a stream of silver flowed into the country

The objects of the East India Company were to secure the abolition of the Hong monopoly, a lowering of the import duties, an abatement of the petty restrictions on foreigners at Canton and, if possible, the opening of fresh ports As a result of its representations to the British government on this score, Lord Macartney was sent on an embassy to the Chinese court He reached Peking in 1793, and was courteously received by Ch'ien Lung, but all his requests were refused Another mission

in 1816, headed by Lord Amherst, encountered much brusquer treatment from Chia Ch'ing, and also accomplished nothing The reason for these failures has often been ascribed to the Manchu refusal to treat with foreign nations on a basis of diplomatic equality, especially evidenced in their insistence on the *k'out'ou*, or prostrations before the emperor While it is true that the Ch'ing emperors inherited from the Ming the idea that relations between China and other states could be only those of suzerain and tributaries, this of itself was not the decisive factor in the attitude of Peking Ch'ien Lung is said to have waived the *k'out'ou* in receiving Macartney, and in his well-known letter to George III he affected to treat that monarch as a loyal tributary who had gone to considerable trouble in sending a mission of homage to the Manchu court, but none the less the British requests were refused Dutch missions to Peking performed whatever ceremonies were required of them, but gained no special privileges

The lofty affectation that foreign trade and intercourse were of no consequence to the Manchu empire concealed a fear that if the Western Powers were allowed to trade freely at Chinese ports they might enter into too intimate relations with disaffected elements in the southern provinces, never very amenable to Manchu domination Furthermore, it was easier to levy duties and to see that Peking got its share of the proceeds when the trade was confined to Canton The Canton officials were naturally anxious to retain the existing system, since, in addition to the normal share of the duties which fell to them, they mulcted the Hong merchants by holding them responsible for any breach of the established regulations by the foreigners for whom they were surety While many of the Hong merchants were bankrupted by official exactions and their own speculative habits, others amassed great wealth The transportation of tea and silk from the interior to Canton was also a source

of gain to the middlemen Thus powerful vested interests opposed any change in the system

The refusal by China to grant extended trade privileges might not of itself have caused a clash had the East India Company retained its monopoly of commerce But from 1784 onwards it had to face the competition of American vessels, which both made serious inroads into the profits of the East India Company and also stimulated protests in England against its monopoly, since the Americans were free-lance traders Thus the American intrusion into the China trade was a prime cause of the abolition in 1834 of the exclusive right on the part of the East India Company to trade or license trade with China This at once widened the British interests in China, and made the British Government the direct agent in furthering the privileges of its subjects In 1833 Lord Napier was appointed Chief Superintendent of Trade at Canton, and instructed to attempt to sound out the Chinese officials on the possibility of removing some of the restrictions on trade They regarded him as simply the successor of the President of the Select Committee of the East India Company, and refused to have any direct dealings with him They furthermore stopped the trade with England, and an impasse resulted which was terminated only by the death of Napier at Macao

The British resolve to secure equality in official intercourse and a removal of the restrictions on trade would sooner or later have ended in a clash in view of the Chinese determination to grant neither of these things War came when it did on account of the conflict over jurisdiction and over the opium traffic The Western Powers were disinclined to surrender to Chinese jurisdiction those of their subjects who committed offences at Canton They had long enjoyed extraterritorial jurisdiction in their relations with the Moslem states in the Levant, and they wished to extend this system to

China The Chinese officials at Canton were usually willing to let the foreigners punish their own delinquents in cases which did not involve homicide, but in regard to this they generally demanded the surrender of the guilty party The British objected chiefly because the Chinese regarded purely accidental homicides as criminal, and imposed the death penalty in the cases of the "Lady Hughes" in 1784 and the "Emily" in 1821, when the seamen responsible were handed over to them Moreover, whereas in Western law each individual was alone responsible for his acts, Chinese jurisprudence regarded him as one of a group each of whom was mutually liable for the actions of its members This doctrine of responsibility pervaded the whole of Chinese society, from the heads of families to the emperor himself Someone must suffer for a crime, if not the actual culprit, then another member of the group to which he belonged The severity of the Chinese penal code, the use of torture in extracting confessions, the corruption prevalent in judicial administration, and the loathsome state of Chinese jails were additional causes of the Westerners' repugnance to submit to Chinese jurisdiction Nor had China any body of commercial law such as existed in the West

The opium poppy and the use of opium for medicinal purposes was introduced into China by the Arabs some time in the T'ang epoch Indian opium was first exported to China by the Portuguese, and the smoking of opium, for a time mixed with tobacco, was picked up by the Chinese from the Dutch in Formosa and Amoy The discovery of a commodity which could be sold in China in exchange for tea and silk was doubly welcome to the East India Company It diminished the silver export to China which had exposed the Company to attacks by its opponents in England, and, since the sale of opium in the British territories in India was a monopoly of the Company, which was also able to tax opium produced

in the native states, it provided a valuable source of revenue to meet the expenses of Indian administration By financing the tea trade it also helped the British Government, which drew revenue from the tea duties in England

In 1723 the Emperor Yung Chêng forbade the sale of opium or the opening of opium shops, and this edict was repeated in subsequent years, notably in 1796 In 1800 Chia Ch'ing forbade the importation of foreign opium and the planting of poppies in China The East India Company thereupon ceased to export opium in its own ships and the Hong merchants stopped dealing in the drug But the Company allowed vessels licensed by it to trade with China to carry opium, and a brisk smuggling trade grew up After 1821 Lintin, Hongkong, and other places became stations for the opium receiving ships, while the Chinese local officials exacted private fees from the opium ships and from the Chinese dealers in return for conniving at the trade Thus the imperial edicts for long remained virtually dead letters The bulk of the imported opium continued to come from India, although Persian and Turkish supplies figured in the Chinese market, brought by American and other foreign vessels, and the whole trade grew by leaps and bounds

The Chinese objected to opium because of its deleterious effects, because the growth of native planting reduced the agricultural lands at a time when the problem of feeding the growing population was becoming serious, and also because the balance of trade turned against China after 1828 and more silver was exported to pay for opium than was received This not only deprived the government of revenue, but also raised the value of silver in relation to copper cash, thus increasing the actual amount of taxes paid by the people, and adding to their already onerous burdens Some officials advised legalizing the opium trade and paying for opium imports

with tea, so as to stop the drain of silver, but the prohibitionist party won the day, and in 1838 Lin Tse-su was appointed High Commissioner at Canton to enforce the edicts against opium

Lin arrived in 1839 and demanded the surrender of all opium then in the possession of foreigners at Canton and the vicinity He further required the signature by the foreign merchants of a bond promising that no ships should in future bring opium, and that if they did the persons concerned should be handed over to the Chinese to suffer the extreme penalties of the law Captain Elliott, the British Superintendent of Trade, surrendered over twenty thousand chests of opium, which were destroyed, but he refused to sign the bond The British community withdrew first to Macao and then to Hongkong At the latter place a riot between seamen and Chinese ended in the death of a Chinese, and Lin then demanded the surrender to him of those responsible Elliott insisted on British jurisdiction, and hostilities resulted Naval and military operations, accompanied by abortive negotiations, went on until in 1842 the British forces entered the Yangtze and took Chinkiang, which is situated where the Grand Canal joins the Yangtze This victory cut off the vital grain tribute to Peking and brought the Manchu court to terms On 29th August, 1842, peace was restored by the Treaty of Nanking

By this Treaty Hongkong was ceded to Great Britain, British subjects were allowed to reside and trade at Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai, the Hong monopoly was abolished and China agreed to pay an indemnity of twenty one million dollars With regard to opium the contention of the British government was that China had an undoubted right to prohibit the trade, but she should not have coerced British subjects to surrender their property, when Chinese had for so long been permitted to ignore the edicts Therefore, although six million dollars of the indemnity were claimed as

compensation for the opium surrendered to Lin, no formal demand was made for the legalization of the opium trade, nor was it mentioned in the Treaty Sir Henry Pottinger, the chief British Envoy, suggested privately to Ch'i Ying that China might put opium on a legal footing, but the Chinese plenipotentiary thought the time was not opportune to raise this question at Peking The Treaty of Nanking itself contained no provision for extraterritorial jurisdiction, but the Trade Regulations supplementary to the Treaty included some not very satisfactory clauses covering this matter By the Treaty of the Bogue in 1843 Great Britain also secured most favoured nation treatment She disclaimed any desire to seek exclusive privileges for herself, and some of the Chinese officials saw the advantage of voluntarily conceding to other Powers what England had obtained by war, so as to prevent her from gaining a too predominant position The American government, anxious to secure equal trade facilities, sent out Caleb Cushing as special Envoy, and in 1844 he negotiated the Treaty of Wanghia, generally similar to the British Treaty, but better drafted, especially with regard to the extraterritorial stipulations It also contained an article providing for revision of the Treaty after twelve years had elapsed A similar stipulation was included in the Treaty of Whampoa, concluded between France and China in the same year

The Emperor Tao Kuang had agreed to the peace with England only when convinced by his ministers Ch'i Ying and Mu Chang-a that there was no alternative if the dynasty, discredited in the eyes of its subjects by the repeated defeats, was to be preserved Lin Tse-su had also come to realize the superiority of the "barbarians" in ships and guns He urged that their military and naval methods be studied, and his representations were not without effect[1] The majority of the viceroys and

[1] Chen, G , *Lin Tse-hsu*

governors, who had not come into contact with foreigners, were still convinced of Chinese superiority and their inertia baulked such attempts as were made at reform Furthermore, they endeavoured to whittle down the treaty provisions as much as possible At Canton, in particular, the authorities refused to allow foreigners within the city limits on the ground that they were not clearly granted this right by treaty On the other hand, the foreign traders were eager to add to their privileges, especially as, with the exception of Shanghai, the treaty ports were defective as centres of trade, either because of poor harbours, or because of inadequate communication with the hinterland The growing weakness of the empire, especially along the southern seaboard, and the greed of many of the local officials, enabled foreigners to overstep the bounds of the treaties Owing to the prevalence of piracy, foreign ships were employed to carry Chinese goods, and so participated in inter-port trade or visited ports not officially opened Chinese also often registered their vessels under foreign, usually British, colours, so as to secure protection, a practice which frequently led to abuses

Another cause of trouble was the recrudescence of Catholic missionary activity in China and the growth of Protestant mission work The Treaties said little on this subject, but France, which had largely replaced Portugal as the protector of Catholicism in the East, secured through Ch'i Ying edicts giving toleration to Chinese Christians, and allowing religious propaganda in the treaty ports, but not in the interior A like treatment was accorded the Protestants The consequence was that the missionaries persisted in going into the interior and preaching, despite the efforts of the consuls to restrain them. The Chinese magistrates were supposed in such cases to arrest the offending zealot and hand him over to the nearest consul of his nation But the local officials and gentry were hostile to the missionaries on both

intellectual and religious grounds, and also because they feared the growth of fresh societies inimical to the dynasty Therefore missionaries were often roughly handled, and then the consuls had to intervene for their protection, thus exacerbating the already strained relations

Upon the accession of Hsien Fêng, Ch'i Ying and other ministers who had advised conciliating the foreign Powers were dismissed, and reaction set in at Peking When Britain, France and America approached China on the question of revision of the treaties they were rebuffed There had already been sporadic acts of hostility at Canton, but in 1856 war came over the seizure of the *Arrow*, one of the vessels of Chinese ownership which had secured British registration France joined with Britain because of the execution of a Catholic priest in Kuangsi After a period of hostilities, desultory owing to the British preoccupation with the Indian Mutiny, the Allies moved north and took the Taku forts, near Tientsin This brought the Manchu government to terms The United States and Russia, which had remained neutral, also sent envoys to make fresh agreements All four Powers concluded treaties, but a misunderstanding followed over the mode of the exchange of ratifications The Chinese agreed that this was to be done at Peking, but refused to allow the envoys to go there by way of Tientsin The American minister went by the Chinese route and was treated as a tribute-bearer The British and French attacked the Taku Forts, but were repulsed War was therefore renewed, and in 1860 an Anglo-French army marched to Peking, defeated the Manchu forces and took the capital, the Emperor Hsien Fêng escaping to Jehol In retaliation for the seizure and cruel treatment of some members of the British mission who had gone forward under a flag of truce the Summer Palace was destroyed A further Treaty, giving additional concessions to the British and French, was signed in Peking

The Treaties of Tientsin and Peking secured to the Western Powers the right of diplomatic representation on terms of equality and of residence in the capital by the envoys and their staffs A number of new ports were opened to trade, especially in the north and along the Yangtze, where foreign vessels were to have the right of navigation Foreigners could also travel anywhere in the interior, when provided with passports Toleration and freedom to proselytize were allowed to foreign and Chinese Christians, while the French inserted in the Chinese text of their convention the right of mission societies to rent or purchase land throughout the empire Further indemnities were exacted by the British and French, while part of Kowloon, opposite Hongkong, was ceded to Great Britain Since 1842 there had been a tacit understanding between the British and the Chinese authorities to leave the opium trade alone, and by 1858 it had in effect been put on a legal footing by the action of the local officials, notably at Foochow and Amoy In 1858 the Trade Regulations agreed on at Shanghai between Lord Elgin, the British envoy, and the Chinese officials sent from Peking, contained a provision for the admission of opium subject to a specified import duty, but foreigners could not take it into the interior and the Chinese government was left free to impose internal transit dues upon it

The Manchu court emerged from the struggle thoroughly discredited and weakened in the eyes of its subjects It had been forced to admit the foreign " barbarians " on terms of equality, and it had sustained considerable losses of territory Great Britain had secured Hongkong and Kowloon , Portugal had seized the chance to assert her sovereignty over Macao, although this was not recognized by China until 1887 ; and, more ominous still, Russia had resumed her advance in the north By the Treaty of Aigun in 1858 she advanced her boundary to the Amur, and by posing as a mediator

between China and the hostile maritime Powers she obtained a second treaty in 1860 which gave her the territory between the Ussuri River and the Pacific.

In 1861 the Emperor Hsien Fêng died, leaving the infant T'ung Chih as his successor By a coup d'état the actual power fell into the hands of the Dowager-Empresses, Tz'ŭ An and Tz'ŭ Hsi, aided by Prince Kung, an able and enlightened statesman Scarcely ever in Chinese annals had the court faced so black an outlook The defeat by the foreign Powers and the heavy indemnities were the least of its problems, for a tremendous upheaval was taking place throughout the whole empire, and hardly a province was free from rebellions, while the support of the people appeared irretrievably lost

Under the first Manchu rulers the treatment of the peasantry contrasted very favourably with conditions in the last decades of the Ming era The land tax was reduced, and in 1713 K'ang Hsi had fixed its maximum rate But in the course of years the growth of court expenditures, the rise in the value of silver in relation to copper cash, and the increasing extortions of the officials and their subordinates aroused discontent The long period of internal peace under K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung resulted in a phenomenal increase in population, which more than doubled, and which outstripped the opening up of new land to cultivation, despite imperial efforts to augment this process This meant reduced subsistence for the average Chinese family and the growth of a landless, vagrant class, ripe for mischief and rebellion Social inequalities were accentuated by land-grabbing on the part of the wealthy families, who were also frequently able to evade their proper share of taxation, thus adding to the burden of the less fortunate, who had to make up the deficiency From the time of Chia Ch'ing sporadic rebellions of secret societies such as the Lotus and the Triad organizations disturbed the peace of the empire

Disaffection was especially rife in Kuangtung and Kuangsi, where Ming traditions were strongest, and where the incidence of the social and economic evils was particularly heavy The arming of a considerable proportion of the populace to aid the inefficient regular forces against the British supplied the malcontents with the means to revolt The local officials, while generally able to hold the walled cities, could do little to quell the uprising in the country-side, and under the leadership of Hung Siu-tsuen, it assumed formidable proportions He was a Cantonese, belonging to a Hakka family, one of those which had migrated to the south during the nomad invasions Failing to pass the local examinations, owing, as he considered, to unfair discrimination, he became embittered, and fell ill During his sickness he had visions of himself as the Messiah of a new religious dispensation He had previously received some missionary tracts, which he now studied, and became convinced that this was the faith indicated in his dreams Some time later he also received instruction from an American missionary, the Reverend Issachar Roberts, although he was never baptized From this background of Confucian scholarly training, Christianity and practical experience of the extortions of the officials and sufferings of the populace Hung evolved his creed Its outstanding tenets were the brotherhood and equality of men and, as a social consequence, the equal distribution of land and the communal ownership of other property The discontented peasantry in Kuangsi rallied to his cause, and he proclaimed a new dynasty, that of *T'ai P'ing*, or Great Peace On this point the powerful Triad society broke with him, since it supported a Ming restoration, or the appearance of one, and so conducted a separate revolt Hung failed to take the provincial capital, and his forces soon became too large to subsist on the limited resources of Kuangsi, so in 1852 he marched into Hunan and up the route to the Yangtze Changsha held out

against him, but the T'ai P'ing forces in 1853 took Hankow and Nanking An army was then despatched against Peking, hoping to join with the Nienfei bandits who were active in Shantung and Honan, but after nearing Tientsin and throwing the court into a panic it was defeated by the Mongol general Sankolinsin and forced back Although generally unable to take the strongly walled cities, the T'ai P'ings, under their "Kings" or military leaders, spread over most of the southern provinces Hung himself took the title of T'ien Wang, or Heavenly King, but his character deteriorated with success, while fighting between the subordinate leaders added to the slaughter and devastation caused by the rebellion

In addition to the T'ai P'ings, the Triads and the Nienfei, a further great catastrophe befell the empire in the revolt of the Moslem population The large Mohammedan communities in Yunnan, Shensi, Kansu and Sinkiang were kept apart from their non-Islamic neighbours by their religious observances, and economic competition was an additional source of trouble Docile enough under the Ming, the Moslems in the Ch'ing period were incensed at the extortions of the officials and at interference in their own religious disputes Ch'ien Lung suppressed one serious Mohammedan revolt, but disturbances continued to be rife The Moslem element consisted partly of Turkis and other non-Chinese peoples and partly of Tungans or Chinese converts to Islam They were thus not united among themselves, which was fortunate for the Ch'ing empire, for they were and are dreaded as savage and determined fighters when once roused In 1855 a great revolt of the Moslems broke out in Yunnan, and the province was for some years practically lost by the Ch'ing Between 1862 and 1865 the Mohammedan populations of Shensi, Kansu and Sinkiang all rose against the Chinese authority The whole of the New Dominion was temporarily lost,

while in the northwestern provinces only a few cities held out Wholesale massacres marked the progress of the revolt, and in northern Sinkiang the victors began to fight among themselves In the area south of the T'ien Shan range a kingdom was established by Yakub Beg, who was for a while regarded by England as a possible ally against the Russians These latter in 1871 occupied Ili and Kuldja, areas which had been devastated by the revolt and were in a state of anarchy, which Russia feared would affect her Turkestan possessions She was engaged in a forward policy in Central Asia, and while explaining that her action was only temporary, until China should have restored order, she never expected to be required to make her word good

The success of the Ch'ing in overcoming this tremendous series of rebellions was due, in the first place, to the internecine quarrels among the rebels as contrasted with a new energy at Peking Both the Empress-Regents were capable women, although Tzŭ An was somewhat overshadowed by her colleague, the famous Tzŭ Hsi Prince Kung, also, was an able man, and the chief merit of all three was that they knew how to support their generals against intrigue and calumny Secondly, what chiefly saved the dynasty was the fact that the Chinese official class and gentry rallied to its support The old Sinic society was fighting against a social upheaval and the influence of alien creeds it emerged frightfully shattered, but victorious Thirdly, the Western Powers, and especially Great Britain, while at first inclined to support the T'ai P'ings and the Moslems, changed their policy after the conclusion of the treaties, with which they were satisfied They came to see that the Manchu court, with all its deficiencies, was likely to be better able to observe the treaty stipulations than the various rebel factions, none of which had the capacity to found a really enduring government Therefore, the "Ever-Victorious" army, a Chinese force trained and

officered by Westerners, was formed against the T'ai P'ings Led by the American, Ward, and later by the English General Gordon, this played an important part in the defeat of these insurgents

The main work in suppressing the rebellions was done by Chinese leaders Tsêng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang both rose to eminence through their ability in organizing and training a new militia to replace the effete Manchu Bannermen, and in leading this force against the rebels But the man who more than any other broke the back of the revolts was Tso Tsung-t'ang, one of the greatest military leaders China ever produced His knowledge of topography, gained in youth by zealous, if unorthodox, geographical studies, gave him a strategical insight and a capacity to plan operations which the others lacked His victories in Hunan, Kiangsi and Chêkiang re-established full imperial control in those provinces, and enabled Tsêng and Li to take Nanking in 1864, when Hung committed suicide and the T'ai Ping power was broken It was Tso who, as Viceroy of Fukien and Kuangtung, annihilated the last rebel army at Chaying in 1866, and completed the pacification of the south [1]

Appointed Viceroy of Shensi and Kansu, Tso next turned his attention to the subjugation of the Nienfei, whom he finally crushed, despite their mobility and elusiveness The Moslems of Shensi and Kansu were far more formidable enemies, and it took five years of desperate and most sanguinary fighting, during which Tso sustained at least one great defeat, before he fully established control of his viceroyalty At the same time an equally long and bitter conflict ended in the suppression of the Panthay, or Yunnan, revolt By the end of 1873 all of China proper had been regained The vast area of Sinkiang remained in rebel hands, but

[1] Bales, Capt W L, *Tso Tsung-t'ang and the Suppression of the Mohammedan Rebellion*, pp 12, *et seq*

despite tremendous difficulties of food supply and transport, Tso Tsung-t'ang, after several years of accumulating provisions, drilling his army and equipping it with modern artillery and rifles, advanced into Central Asia, and slowly but methodically reconquered Sinkiang His task was facilitated by the suicide of Yakub Beg in May, 1877, and during the following winter the Chinese armies entered Kashgar and Yarkand, bringing the operations to a victorious close

The various rebellions were thus at last ended, but at a frightful cost The indiscriminate slaughter of the civilian population indulged in by both imperialists and insurgents, widespread famine in the rural areas due to the interruption of agricultural labours or to the seizure and destruction of crops by the armies, the burning and devastation of countless towns and villages and widespread plague in the war-torn provinces, all combined to cause a total loss of life estimated at forty millions In Shensi, Kansu and Sinkiang there were large areas where hardly one in ten of the population survived Yunnan and the rich Yangtze delta region suffered scarcely less, while hardly a district in the whole vast empire entirely escaped the ravages of war

Nevertheless, such is the recuperative power of the Chinese people that the empire, from 1870 to 1894, appeared to gain in strength, and made a better showing against the foreign Powers than it had done in the days of Tao Kuang and Hsiên Feng One consequence of the Treaties of Tientsin was the establishment in 1861 of the Tsungli Yamen, or Board of Foreign Affairs This had grave defects as an organ of diplomatic intercourse, since its members, temporarily appointed to it while holding other high offices of state, had little or no experience of foreign relations and were rarely united on matters of policy Its procrastinations were the despair of the Western diplomats, although the Chinese found delay often a useful method of avoiding an

unpleasant issue or of allowing time to curb the zeal of some aggressive minister

The Manchu government was materially aided by the organization of the Imperial Maritime Customs In 1853 the Triad rebels took the Chinese city of Shanghai, and this prevented the collection of customs dues by the imperial officials The consuls agreed with the local taot'ai to nominate foreigners who would supervise the payment of the duties This system worked so well that it was extended to other ports, and the Peking government, seeing the advantages of an efficient, incorruptible and centralized administration of the customs revenue, agreed to appoint an Inspector-General In 1863 Mr , later Sir Robert, Hart was given sole control of this post, and under his long and able guidance the Maritime Customs became a great organization, entrusted not only with the collection of revenue, but also with the buoying and lighting of the coasts and rivers and with the development of a postal system The responsible positions were held by foreigners, of whom the majority were British, and through their services the government was assured of a steadily growing income, which until 1895 enabled it to meet the drain of war and rebellion without heavy borrowing abroad

The long years of warfare had convinced some of the leading Chinese statesmen of the necessity of further reorganizing and modernizing the armed forces of the empire Tsêng Kuo-fan, Li Hung-chang and Tso Tsung-t'ang all repeatedly urged this upon the Throne, the representations of the last-named being especially marked by a clear grasp of how the matter should be undertaken Tsêng died in 1872 and Tso in 1885, but Li remained as Viceroy of Chihli and to a large degree the real director of foreign affairs He built up an army, drilled and equipped on western patterns, and also a modern steam fleet

In her foreign relations China was fortunate in that

Great Britain, whose preponderant diplomatic, naval and commercial position was strengthened by the opening of the Suez Canal, the growth of steamer traffic and the initiation of telegraphic communications, was averse to further pressure, which might cause a collapse and a partition of the Chinese empire Perceiving that this would operate to her disadvantage, Britain sought to check Russian and French ambitions, while in 1868 the British Foreign Minister, Clarendon, agreed with a visiting Chinese mission under Anson Burlingame, former American Minister at Peking and a strong, if undiscriminating, advocate of the Chinese cause, to refrain from pressing for fresh concessions The policy of dealing with the provincial authorities directly, usually by means of a naval demonstration, was also to be modified In 1875 the murder of Mr Margary, a British official sent to Yunnan to seek an overland trade route between China and Burma, caused a fresh Anglo-Chinese crisis, but was finally settled by the Chefoo Convention of 1876 Britain and China drew closer after this, owing to their common fear of France and Russia In 1885, at the time of the Anglo-Russian crisis over Afghanistan, and again in 1893, when Britain and France were on the verge of war about Siam, proposals for an Anglo-Chinese alliance were made, but came to nothing Had they done so, the whole history of the Extreme Orient might have been altered

While British relations with China became warmer those of the United States tended to be less friendly America posed as the champion of the Oriental Powers against European aggression, in order to safeguard equality of commercial opportunity, but she was weak in maritime power, while the inexperience and naiveté of her diplomatic agents, mostly political appointees, militated against her influence She had at first welcomed Chinese immigrants into California and others of her western states, but the growth of a popular sentiment

in favour of exclusion forced her to change her attitude, and caused ill-feeling on both sides With the growth of rivalry between China and Japan, America was inclined to favour the more progressive Japanese, whom she regarded as her protégés, since the reopening of Japan by Commodore Perry

The question of Ili and Kuldja caused a serious crisis in Chinese relations with Russia In 1879 Chung Hou was sent to negotiate for the evacuation of these territories, but he agreed to a treaty giving most of them to Russia The indignant Peking government repudiated the treaty and threatened Chung Hou with death, whereupon Russia adopted a bellicose attitude and sent a large fleet into Chinese waters She did not in reality want war, as she had a respect for the army of Tso Tsung-t'ang in Sinkiang, and, moreover, had not recovered from her war with Turkey The Marquis Tsêng, son of Tsêng Kuo-fan, was sent to negotiate a new agreement, and by the Treaty of St Petersburg in 1881 China recovered most of the disputed area, in return for an indemnity to Russia for the expenses of occupation This was regarded as a notable diplomatic victory, and greatly increased the prestige of China In 1891 Russia began the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and Li Hung-chang, who saw that this would greatly augment her power in the Far East, urged the building of Chinese railways in Manchuria as a counter move, but the conservatism and inertia of most Chinese officials prevented anything effective from being done

France under Napoleon III built up a colonial empire in Indo-China, and was also active in supporting the Catholic missionaries, whose interference in local administration in support of their converts was a constant source of irritation to the Chinese In 1870 the massacre of Catholics at Tientsin might have provoked a conflict had not the Franco-Prussian War supervened

to put an end to the Second Empire Under the ambitious Jules Ferry the French Republic revived the policy of expansion in Indo-China and began to penetrate Annam, which China claimed as her tributary Chinese protests and assistance to the Black Flag irregulars, who were opposing the French advance, led to hostilities between France and China in 1884–5 The Chinese were defeated at Foochow, where Admiral Courbet destroyed a Chinese squadron, but he was checked in an attempt to seize Formosa, and in Tonkin the French suffered a sharp reverse Peace was restored in 1885, after the fall of Ferry China recognized French suzerainty over Annam, but escaped payment of the indemnity which France had at first demanded

In 1894 the Manchu power still seemed formidable Some outlying possessions had been lost, but the foreigners remained confined to a few treaty ports, and China had as yet incurred no large financial obligations abroad Internal disruption had been averted and reform, although slow, seemed to be developing There was a tendency among some foreign observers to exaggerate Chinese military strength, although others saw the grave deficiencies behind the outward show of power The Japanese had long known the true state of affairs, and in 1894 they ushered in a new epoch by launching their forces against the Celestial Empire